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NEGOTIATING POWER IN THE ESL CLASSROOM:

POSITIONING TO LEARN

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NEGOTIATING POWER IN THE ESL CLASSROOM:

POSITIONING TO LEARN

by

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Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Texas at Austin

May 2012

Dedication

To my love, Gökhan Aydar, my grandmothers, Şükriye Cankaya and Hayriye Kayı, and my grandfather, Bekir Cankaya

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Even before deciding on my dissertation topic, I thought whom I would thank, as I knew that there would be many people who would support me throughout the researching and writing of this dissertation. First and foremost, I would like to thank Dr. Elaine K. Horwitz, my supervisor, mentor, and role-model. Dr. Horwitz is certainly one of the best professors I have had or will ever come across, in all aspects of teaching, research, and personality. Whenever I needed to speak with her, she always responded with care and concern. She is simply a wonderful person to work with. Without a doubt, as my mentor and dissertation chair, Dr. Horwitz has been very influential in my professional and personal development. I can only hope that I will have the kind of positive impact on my students in the future that Dr. Horwitz has had on me. I cannot express how grateful I am to Dr. Horwitz for all her support through the years. Thank you, Dr. Horwitz!

I am also very appreciative of the other members of my committee. I am grateful to Dr. Kristen Brustad, who employed me throughout my graduate studies. Kristen frequently took her time out of her busy schedule to discuss my data; her comments were always challenging and insightful. Her expert advice, wisdom, encouragement, and smile have immensely and positively contributed to this work! I am also grateful to Dr. Diane Schallert, whom I position as the cheerleader of the FLE program. Her optimism and positive attitudes are what every doctoral student needs! In the doctoral program, I had the privilege to take three courses from Dr. Beth Maloch. My interest in positioning and understanding of the concept grew in those classes. Therefore, Dr. Maloch's teaching and knowledge certainly occupy an important role in my work. Also, she is the person who made me fall in love with discourse analysis! I am also grateful to Dr. Bill Johnston, who always fascinated me with his comments, questions, and approach to classroom discourse

and identity. Despite the physical distance between us, Bill was always there whenever I needed to get his advice.

I am deeply indebted to the students whom I identified as Hashim, Ahmad, Rolanda, Martina, Chen, Gui Min, Takumi, Viresh, and Fareed who participated in my study. I am also grateful to Betsy, the classroom teacher, who allowed me to observe her class and participated in this study. Without their participation, contributions, and enthusiasm, I could not have written this dissertation.

My special thanks go to my former boss, my friend and mentor, Dr. Linda Munoz, who read multiple drafts of my dissertation. Our meetings always resulted in fruitful conversations and I was able to see my data from the perspectives I would not be able to adopt on my own. Thank you, Linda!

I would like to acknowledge the financial assistance of the Graduate School of the University of Texas at Austin, which supported three years of my doctoral studies. Those fellowships enabled me to present my initial findings at major international conferences and receive constructive feedback.

My students in my ESL and Turkish language classes have contributed to my work in various ways, to which I extend my warmest appreciation. I am also thankful to my friends, aunts, uncles, cousins, and former professors who always encouraged and supported me.

My parents, Yaşar and Necip Kayı, and my dear brother, Halil İbrahim Kayı, have immensely supported me with their love throughout! I am also grateful to my grandparents, whose prayers and love I have always appreciated. I dedicate this dissertation to my grandmothers, Şükriye and Hayriye, who were never given an opportunity to go to school only because they were female. My accomplishment is yours!

Finally, I am most grateful to Gökhan Aydar, my love, husband, and best friend, who supported me in countless ways! His love and endless patience have helped me cope with many hard moments. I thank you, Gökhan, for being the most caring and most generous person I have ever known.

Negotiating power in the ESL classroom: Positioning to Learn

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2012

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This qualitative case study drew on Positioning Theory (e.g., Davies & Harré, 1990) to explore the ways in which the negotiation of power and positioning affected language learning. Participants were nine students and their female teacher in a university-level English for Academic Purposes (EAP) Oral Skills (Listening and Speaking) class. Methods of data collection included the video- and audio-taping of classroom activities for 3.5 months, interviews with students and their teacher, field notes of classroom observations, diaries, and relevant teacher and learning artifacts. As a participant observer, I explored positioning, which refers to locating oneself and others with certain rights and obligations to allow or limit certain actions, in classroom talk and investigated its interaction with second language learning and use. After spending a certain amount of time in the field, I chose two male students as my focal participants, as their positioning and participation differed in terms of quantity and quality of their talk. Through a recursive micro-analysis of classroom interaction and qualitative analysis of other data sources, the findings indicated that the two focal participants constantly dominated classroom conversations and positioned themselves in ways beneficial to them, while other students in the same classroom experienced difficulties in negotiating

symbolic power and gaining access to learning opportunities. Additionally the findings showed how interactive and reflexive positioning of learners, which were impacted by a large number of factors, including age, socio-cultural backgrounds, and beliefs, assigned students certain identities and social status over the course of the semester. If second language acquisition is fostered in the classroom by communicative interactions, teachers should attempt to minimize students' differential access to second language learning opportunities as much as possible.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Rationale and Significance

It is widely accepted in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) that second language learning cannot be explained only via the input students are exposed to or the output that they produce (e.g., Firth & Wagner, 1997; Norton, 2000). Scholars adopting a social and post-structural approach to language learning have emphasized the importance of social, cultural, and political contexts in understanding second language learning and use (e.g., Norton, 2000; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007). The identities of language learners, in particular, have become an important area of investigation. Studies on identity have mostly focused on language and socialization processes (e.g., Cervatiuc, 2009; Day, 2002; Duff, 2002; Duff, Wong, & Early, 2002; Fernsten, 2008; Gordon, 2004; Menard-Warwick, 2004; Miller, 2000; Norton, 2000; Schecter & Bayley, 1997; Shi, 2006; Talmy, 2008) and provided insights into how second language (L2) learners function in a new culture and language as well as where the gaps lie. For example, in an ethnographic study of ten recently arrived high school ESL students in Australia, Miller (2007) explored how these linguistic minority students negotiated an emerging new sense of social identity while acquiring and operating in a second language. Perhaps the most influential study was that of Norton (2000) who explored the issues of identity, power, and access to English in classroom and work settings of five immigrant women in Canada. Norton argued that "the learning of a second language is not simply a skill that is

acquired with hard work and dedication, but a complex social practice that engages the identities of language learners" (p. 132).

Norton (2000) and other SLA researchers (e.g., Lvovich, 2003) further stated that when people arrive in a new country, they are affected socially and culturally by the act of immigration. The new cultural setting, where L2 learners study, work, interact, and communicate, is not simply a place for learning the target language anymore, but an important sociocultural context for their identity negotiation, which is a result of new interactions and experiences. In this context, L2 learners can adjust the ways they communicate and act in relation to others and gain power. Feelings of being powerful can create a positive sense of self. However, the negotiation is not always easy. Sometimes, the change is experienced as a process of re-creation or resistance, rather than readjustment, and leads to feelings of powerlessness (Clayton, Barnhardt, & Brisk, 2008; Lvovich, 2003). Both situations were reported in a study conducted by Gordon (2004). While Lao women in the United States in Gordon's study experienced increased opportunities for enacting their gender identities through expanded leadership roles and wage labor, the opportunities gradually decreased for Lao men, who had lost access to traditional sources of power. As the findings of Gordon's study demonstrated, language learning both influenced and was influenced by these changing identities. In another study, Miller (2007) explored the relationships between second-language use, textual practices in school, and the representation of identity and reported that anxiety about transition, degrees of social isolation during holidays, and the problem of length in texts and tasks made it difficult for L2 learners to form positive selves. These researchers

suggested that teachers' awareness of complex identity shifts and conflicts should be raised while teaching approaches, methods, curricula, and interactions with their students should be re-examined.

Initial identity research mostly focused on the adult migrant contexts (e.g., Gordon, 2004; Menard-Warwick, 2004; Norton, 2000; Teutsch-Dwyer, 2001; Warriner, 2010). In the past decade, there has been increasing attention on mainstream classrooms where researchers have aimed to understand how English language learners (ELLs) situate themselves and negotiate identities. Overall, these studies reported that peers who were native speakers of English usually marginalized ELLs and denied them opportunities to participate in classroom practices (e.g., Ajayi, 2006; Miller, 2000). Ellis (2008) claimed that

> learners do not usually participate in communicative events as equals – at least when their interlocutors are native speakers. One reason for the lack of equality may be the learner's overall social status in the native-speaker community. . . . For example, adult learners in conversations with native speakers are likely to have few opportunities to nominate topics and tend not to compete for turns. This restricts the range of speech acts they will need to perform. It is not yet clear what the repercussions of this are for the acquisition of both linguistic and pragmatic competence, but there is sufficient evidence to suggest that learners may benefit from opportunities for a more equal discourse role, such as occurs in communication with other learners. (p. 197)

Although L2 learners may not participate equally when they are with native speakers, Ellis's final claim regarding learner-learner communication still remains ambiguous and should be questioned. Given the fact that there are differences among L2 learners in terms of age, gender, race, ethnicity, status, culture, L2 competence, how can ESL learners really have "equal discourse roles"? Does each learner in an ESL classroom have the same access to use the language all are learning? Does each of them equally

benefit from learning opportunities? The "sufficient evidence" Ellis claimed has not been able to provide satisfactory answers to these and many other similar questions. The negotiation of identity is as complicated in ESL classrooms, where sociocultural issues are intertwined in complex ways, as it is in work settings or mainstream classrooms. Although the research on identity has helped us understand why and how L2 learners interact with native speakers and negotiate identities, participation, and membership in various settings, there is limited research on the same issues in ESL classrooms, especially in Intensive English programs (IEPs).

Furthermore, the majority of the studies that aimed to understand identities and power relations in L2 contexts mostly used interviews or narrated autobiographies as the primary source of data (e.g., Norton, 2000). Although interactional sociolinguists and L2 researchers have employed more dynamic research methodologies (e.g., interviews, observations, and case studies) than social psychologists who have relied heavily on questionnaires and surveys, these methodological choices still do not fully capture the dynamic phenomenon of identity (Hansen & Liu, 1997). Hansen and Liu further argued that "onetime research cannot be adequate to study social identity, as social identity is often context bound, and therefore onetime research yields only one view of a complex phenomenon" (p. 573). Indeed, interviews and field notes alone do not appear to be sufficient in explaining how second language learners negotiate competence, identities, and power, which are all constructed, co-constructed, and reconstructed in and through conversation. Therefore, in order to understand better how these issues relate to and

interact with second language learning, a sociolinguistic microanalysis of classroom talk is necessary.

It is with this aim and to address these gaps in the field that this study used Positioning Theory (e.g., Davies & Harré, 1999) as a technique and theoretical framework to analyze classroom discourse in explaining the relations between power, competence, and positional identities as well as second language learning experiences of ESL learners in an academic IEP. Positioning theory emphasizes that meaningful communication is only possible when people not only possess the skills necessary to say things, but also know when it is appropriate to say them and what the possible consequences are. Coming from different cultural backgrounds, it is possible that ESL learners bring into this new social setting various cultural and moral orders that might be in conflict with each other or may not be valued in the target setting. Therefore, the actions and interactions of learners may lead to misunderstandings between individuals and/or the group that will then place or define them in ways not originally intended. In this regard, positioning theory is an important conceptual and methodological tool that can help elucidate how communication in language classrooms is constructed and what rights, duties, and obligations are available for second language learners to form and negotiate identities. Furthermore, as Pavlenko (2002) argued, L2 learners' positions mediate their access to linguistic resources as well as shape their language learning and use. Such positions also lead to differences in students' participation in classroom events and discussions. Positioning theory is therefore eye-opening by helping classroom teachers realize such differences, making the invisible visible in the learning process.

A small but growing body of research in the field of education has recently attempted to investigate positioning in a number of contexts, mostly in primary and secondary school classrooms, with a particular focus on group work. These studies investigated power relations (e.g., Ritchie, 2002), gender (e.g., Clarke, 2005), mainstream peers (e.g., Miller, 2000), and also focused on teacher-student talk that impacted students' access to the learning process (e.g., Black, 2004) as well as teachers' identity construction or negotiation (e.g., Reeves, 2008). When compared to other fields of education, the number of studies that employed Positioning Theory in second/foreign language contexts, especially in ESL classroom settings, is scarce. By exploring positioning and classroom participation in this study, I aimed to understand how ESL learners negotiated their positional identities, power, and competence in classroom events and how this negotiation interacted with their L2 learning.

Research Questions

The gap in the literature and the need for studies that incorporate talk data to better understand ESL learners' negotiation of positional identities, power, and classroom participation were the main reasons to conduct this study and to address the following research questions:

1. How does positioning occur in an IEP ESL classroom and how does such positioning facilitate or hinder classroom participation?
2. How do the ESL learners negotiate positional identities, power, competence, and participation in classroom activities?
3. How does positioning interact with English language learning?

In order to address these questions, I conducted a qualitative case study using discourse analysis as a method. I used classroom discourse as the primary source of data to understand positioning and its interaction with second language learning and use. I used interviews, field notes of classroom observations, student diaries, and relevant teacher and learning artifacts as supplementary data.

Organization of the Dissertation

The remaining chapters of this dissertation center around the research questions above. Chapter 2 starts with a description of the theoretical framework, discusses findings in the related literature, and provides a context for the research questions explored here. Chapter 3 includes a description of the methods used to investigate my research questions, introduces the participants, and describes the setting. In Chapter 4, I present related findings and demonstrate how two focal participants positioned themselves and others during classroom interactions. This chapter consists of three parts. In the first two parts of the chapter, I describe the negotiation of positional identities and classroom participation of my two focal participants, Hashim and Ahmad, respectively. In part three, I compare the two cases and reveal how Hashim was allowed while Ahmad was denied membership in the same classroom. Chapter 5 provides a summary of my findings in light of the literature, detailed discussion of theoretical and practical implications, and possibilities for future research.

CHAPTER 2

This study focuses on positioning and power relations and their possible impact on ESL learners' access to learning opportunities in an academic oral skills classroom. In order to understand positioning, classroom participation, and second language learning practices of ESL students, I draw on Positioning Theory (Davies & Harré, 1999) as well as social views of second language learning (Firth & Wagner, 1997; Norton, 2000). In this chapter, I first describe positions and positioning theory and its possible relation to second language learning. Since I believe that there is a tight connection between positioning and access to learning opportunities, I also review how the term "learning opportunities" is used in the educational literature with a particular focus on Crabbe's opportunity framework (2003). I then define power, discourse, and competence, all of which I use frequently in this study, following the work of Fairclough (2001) and van Dijk (2008). Finally, I explain my own understanding of second language learning within the related literature and review scholarly work on ESL classroom participation, positioning, and identity.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Positioning Theory, Positions, and Roles

Positioning Theory

Positioning Theory (e.g., Davies & Harré, 1999), rooted in discursive social psychology, social constructivism, and discourse analysis, is the study of positions created in story lines as well as the social force of what is being said and done (acts and

actions). It therefore emphasizes the social construction of identities and the world through talk between people. Situated in post-structuralism and narratology, partly built on Austin's work on speech acts (see Austin, 1962), and in light of an immanentist view (see Davies, 2000; Davies & Harré, 1999), the theory studies acts that refer to meanings of actions. Harré and Slocum (2003) argued that there are three categories of actions: "Those one has done, is doing, or will do; those which one is permitted, allowed or encouraged to do; and those which one is physically and temperamentally capable of doing (p. 125)." and they further state that "Positioning theory is concerned with the relations between these three domains. The focus, however, is on the relation between what one has or believes one has or lacks a right to perform and what one does, in the light of that belief" (p. 125).

van Langenhove and Harré (1999) suggested that individuals, through the use of positions, may implicitly limit or allow certain social actions, such as giving an opportunity to a person to speak in a particular context and at a certain time. Being assigned positions by others or assigning positions to them is called *positioning*, "a discursive process whereby people are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced story lines" (Davies & Harré, 1999, p. 37). Positioning relates to situating oneself or others with particular rights and obligations through conversation (Rex & Schiller, 2009). Positioning is therefore a dynamic construction of identities in discourse.

Position

Davies and Harré (1999) drew on Hollway (as quoted in Davies & Harré, 1999) who used the term, *position,* in his work on gender, to refer to presentations of self in communicative productions. Davies and Harré (1999) defined a *position* as

> a complex cluster of generic personal attributes, structured in various ways, which impinges on the possibilities of interpersonal, intergroup, and even intrapersonal action through some assignment of such rights, duties and obligations to an individual as are sustained by the cluster. (p. 1)

These *positions* or *clusters* may reflect social status as well as biological aspect. "Claims to have certain rights and acceptance or undertaking of certain duties are basic active-self positioning moves" (Harré & Slocum, 2003, p. 125). It is through these positional moves that people deny or give rights to others to do or not to do certain things. For instance, when one person positions another as stupid, he or she denies that person the ability to correct one's cognitive performances (Davies, 1999).

In positioning theory, drawing on post-structural views, the term *position* has been used to capture the dynamic aspects of selfhood. Unlike the humanist subject, post-structural selfhood "is constantly in process; it only exists as process; it is revised and (re)presented through images, metaphors, story lines, and other features of language, such as pronoun grammar; it is spoken and re-spoken, each speaking existing in a palimpsest with the others" (Davies, 2000, p. 137). As speakers actively and agentively position themselves in talk (Korobov & Bamberg, 2004), they (co)construct and (re)shape their self.

Other scholars have used various similar concepts to capture the fluid aspects of one's self in relation to others. For example, Benwell and Stokoe (2006) used

conversational identities to stress how identities are "performed, constructed, enacted or produced, moment-to-moment, in everyday conversations" (p. 49). Similarly, Holland et al. (1998) used the concept *positional identities* to describe the daily, real world dynamic "relations of power, deference and entitlement, social affiliation and distance – with the social-interactional, social-relational structures of the lived world" (p. 127). Both definitions stress that identities are constructed in everyday discourse.

Although the term *position* seems to be used interchangeably with *conversational* or *positional identities*, there is still some nuance. In my understanding, *positional* or *conversational identities* are constructed and reconstructed through each position that emerges over social interaction. The same individual can manifest any of his/her identities or be assigned new identities in the form of positions in different social contexts. Taken over a period of time, some particular positions become more dominant in one's mode of self-presentation in particular contexts. For example, being a silent student is a positional identity and one of the multiple identities one has. What makes a student silent is the positions that the student takes up and the behaviors he or she displays in relation to other people over a certain period of time in a particular social context. It is through the accumulations of positions that *positional* or *conversational* identities are formed and shaped. The person becomes, in a sense, a compound noun (e.g., silent student) or a label (e.g., troublemaker) that s/he may internalize to act or not to act on in future. My interpretation of the connection between identities and positions is consistent with Davies and Harré (1990):

> A subject position incorporates both a conceptual repertoire and a location for persons within the structure of rights and duties for those

> who use that repertoire. Once having taken up a particular position as one's own, a person inevitably sees the world from the vantage point of that position and in terms of the particular images, metaphors, story lines and concepts which are made relevant within the particular discursive practice in which they are positioned. (p. 46)

In a way, the positions people take up form who they are. Therefore, as Davies and Harré (1999) claimed,

> An individual emerges through the processes of social interaction, not as a relatively fixed end product but as one who is constituted and reconstituted through the various discursive practices in which they participate. . . . It is one and the same person who is variously positioned in a conversation. Yet as variously positioned we may want to say that that very same person experiences and displays aspects of self that are involved in the continuity of a multiplicity of selves. (p. 35)

Davies and Harré (1999) stated that positioning is the dynamic construction of personal identities and an essential feature of social interaction. Therefore, analyzing positioning in written and oral discourse is a way of uncovering participants' identities. The mutual relationship between identities, positional identities, and positions can be visually presented as in Figure I.

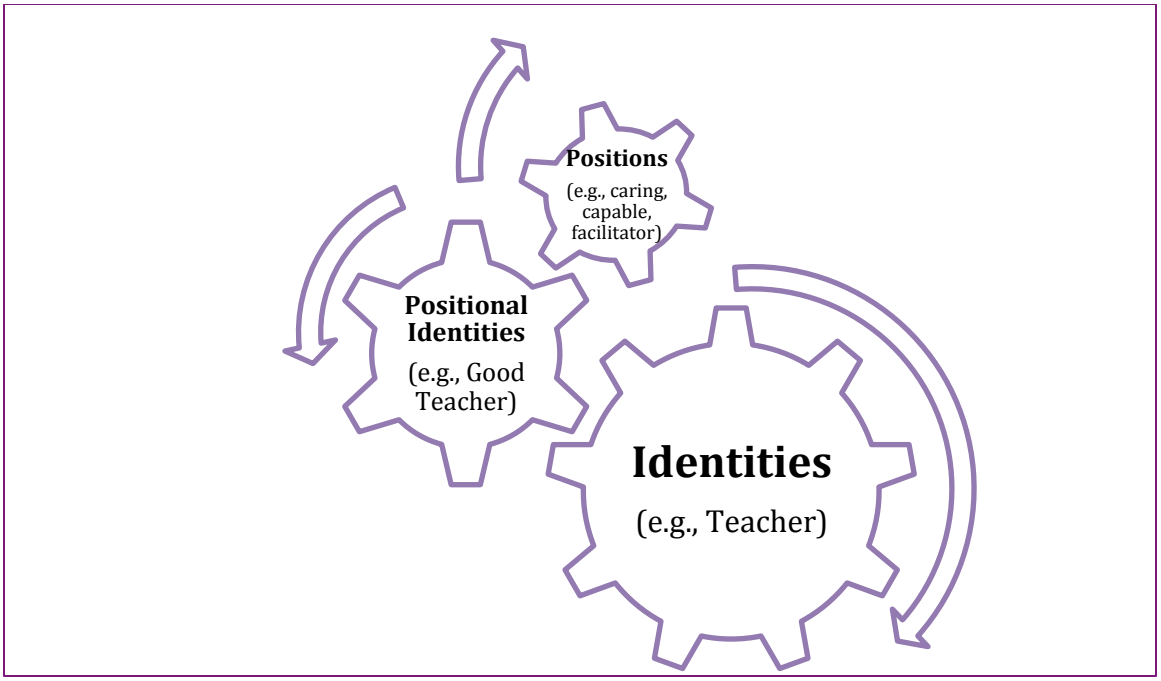


Figure 1: Relationship between identities, positional identities, and positions.

Previously, I have stated that positions emerge naturally out of social contexts and conversations. However, "neither story lines nor positions are freely constructed" (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999, p. 19). It is the members of a conversation who "jointly construct a sequence of position/act-action/story line triads" (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999, p. 19). While social episodes develop, this development does not occur randomly. Each social episode follows "already established patterns of development", which Harré and Moghaddam (2003) call story lines. In each social episode, there can be one or more story lines. Slocum and van Langenhove (2003) define story lines as "the contexts of acts and positions" (p. 225) Story lines both exist prior to and are also created in conversations and "implicitly or explicitly link the past with the present and future" (Slocum and van Langenhove, 2003, p. 225). Although Davies and Harré (1990) emphasize that the story line is an important component of positioning theory, I find their

description of the concept a little bit superficial, and rather vague. In my understanding, the topic of a conversation is not a story line, but story lines are developed around certain topics. The following example from van Langenhove and Harré (1999) helped me understand the concept better.

1)	Deborah:	Yeah?
2)	Peter:	Before that… I read the French Lieutenant's Woman?
3)		Have you [read that?
4)	Deborah:	[Oh yeah. No. who wrote that?
5)	Peter:	John Fowles.
6)	Deborah:	Yeah, I've heard that he's good.
7)	Peter:	He's a great writer. I think he's one of the best [writers
8)	Deborah:	[hm
9)	Deborah:	?
10)	Peter:	He's really good.
11)	Deborah:	?
12)	Peter:	But I get very busy .. [Y'know?
13)	Deborah:	[Yeah, I … hardly ever read.
14)	Peter:	what I've been doing is cutting down on my sleep.
15)	Deborah:	Oy! (Sighs)
16)	Peter:	And I've been (Steve laughs)… and I [s
17)	Deborah:	[I do that, too, but it's painful

As van Langenhove and Harré (1999) demonstrate, there is a story line from 1 to 8 while another story line begins at line 12 and continues. van Langenhove and Harré claim that the first episode positions Peter and Deborah as teacher and learner and the story line is instruction. They argue that "a new story line unfolds in which Peter tells a strip of his life with the narrative conventions of 'hard times' " (p. 18). Their example and analysis indicate that a story line is a chunk of conversation that develops around a certain topic among participants.

The story lines, positions, and acts/actions closely influence each other. Davies (1999) claims that "positions are identified in part by extracting the autobiographical

aspects of a conversation" (p. 91). The positions people assign to themselves and others are impacted by a previous story line(s) or the story line developing in the conversation. When people take up new positions, certain acts and actions will emerge, and a new story line will develop. The sequence of statements and displays of personhood will create a new story line(s).

Positions vs. Roles

In interactional sociolinguistics, Goffman's work (1959) is seen to be one of the essential pieces that has contributed to our understanding of social episodes and interactions. In his work, Goffman aims to understand conversations from the roles people occupy. It is therefore possible, according to him, to understand any particular conversation in terms of someone taking on a certain role. Focusing on the dynamicity of social episodes, Harré and van Langenhove (1999) have criticized Goffman, saying that it is not always feasible to understand an interaction only in terms of the roles the conversants occupy and the general rules. They claimed that a more fluid concept is necessary in order to understand much of what is going on and "how social and psychic phenomena are 'constructed'" (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999, p. 6). They use the term "position" to "help focus attention on dynamic aspects of encounters in contrast to the way in which the use of 'role' serves to highlight static, formal, and ritualistic aspects" (p. 32). Roles are about sociocultural expectations of individuals and therefore represent "a set of constraints and requirements" (Harré & Slocum, 2003) whereas positions are situation-specific, disputed, challenged, changing, and shifting (Harré & Slocum, 2003; van Langenhove and Harré, 1999). "Fluid positionings, not fixed roles, are used by

people to cope with situations they usually find themselves in" (van Langenhove and Harré, 1999, p. 17). A position, however, can be specified by reference to a person's role (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999).

Despite their criticism of "roles", Davies and Harré (1999) suggest that the term 'footing' that Goffman uses in his latest work (1981) is almost identical to the concept of 'positioning'. Footing, in very simple turns, refers to changes or turns in a conversation. According to Goffman,

> A change of footing implies a change in the alignment we take up to ourselves and to the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance. A change in our footing is another way of talking about a change in our frame for events. . . . participants over the course of their speaking constantly change their footing, these changes being a persistent feature of natural talk. (p. 128)

Although their description includes the fluid nature of conversations as well as natural changes, as Davies and Harré suggest, Goffman is still influenced by his earlier work that aims to explain any conversation with pre-determinate "roles" of speakers. "Alignments" and "frames" in Goffman's work also exist prior to speaking and shape it, which is in contrast to the conception of positioning which sees alignments as "actual relations jointly produced in the very act of conversing" (Davies & Harré, 1999, p. 45).

Modes of Positioning

In their description of positioning theory, van Langenhove and Harré (1999) define and describe different modes of positioning. Essentially, there are two types of positioning: *interactive* and *reflexive*. *Interactive positioning* refers to assigning positions

to others. What one says positions other(s). *Reflexive positioning* is about assigning positions to oneself. What one says positions oneself. Moghaddam (1999) claims that

> Reflexive positions are always emerging, changing, and shifting based in part on how a person's utterances are hearable to oneself as speaker. One's life story and fragments of it are never fixed or sealed but are in ceaseless movement, continually retold as new experiences are integrated. (p. 77)

There is also first and second order positioning. Most first order positioning, the initial positioning in any conversation, is tacit; people do not always position themselves or others in intentional ways. When the first order positioning results in an action, it becomes performative positioning. The act (what is being said) leads to an action (what is being accomplished).

As acknowledged by Harré and Moghaddam (2003), positioning theory recognizes that people are constantly changing as their circumstances and contexts change. The change does not happen in a vacuum and is open to dispute. People do not necessarily accept their assigned positions or others' interpretations, but may attempt to refuse them or impose their own. "Sometimes an initial seizure of the dominant role in a conversation will force the other speakers into speaking positions they would not have occupied voluntarily, so to say" (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999, p. 18). By engaging in repositioning, people claim a right or a duty to challenge the initial positioning or they can deny someone a right or refuse a duty or challenge the right of someone to assign positions. Repositioning occurs when there is a need to question or negotiate first order positioning. In this case, "initial positionings can be challenged and the speakers sometimes thereby repositioned" (van Langenhove and Harré, 1999, p. 18).

In his discussion of positioning, Moghaddam (1999) claims that positioning on any level requires an analysis of cultural considerations because cultural differences may influence positioning practices. According to him, positioning practices vary with:

1) the particular cultural ideals persons desire to move toward through positioning;
2) the particular dimensions which persons find relevant in positioning themselves and others in discourse;
3) the preferred forms of autobiographic telling, which may influence the types of stories people tell themselves about themselves in the process of positioning (p. 80).

In conclusion, positioning theory aims to explain details of social interaction through the concept of positioning, which is comprised of positions and story lines. These positions and story lines together limit or lead to possible actions and meanings as well as rights, duties, and responsibilities relative to shared cultural repertoires, which in turn shape who we are.

Learning Opportunities

The term learning opportunity has been frequently used in the educational literature and is increasingly being used in discussions of TESOL classroom practices (Li & Rich, 2009). Despite its frequent use, the term has been inadequately explained. In his opportunity framework, Crabbe (2003) discusses the relation between opportunities, curriculum, and quality and considers a curriculum "an organization of learning opportunities, or means, for achieving certain outcomes, or ends" (p. 10). He argues that outcomes in any language classroom or curriculum can be achieved via good process:

> Good process requires good learning opportunities and good exploitation of those opportunities by individual learners, by individual teachers, and by multiple

> groups of teachers and learners working together in an institutional context. (p. 14)

Therefore, the effectiveness of a program, according to Crabbe, depends on the quality of the process represented by his opportunity framework. In this project, I will not be using the term, learning opportunity, to mean access to favorable learning conditions (as in educational opportunity). Rather, in this research, learning opportunities refer to any cognitive or metacognitive activity that is likely to lead to an increase in knowledge or skill (Crabbe, 2003, 2007). Thus, negotiating meaning in a discussion is a learning opportunity, as is processing comprehensible input or getting direct feedback on one's own use of language (Crabbe, 2003, 2007).

Xie (2011) argues that the creation and use of learning opportunities are especially important in ESL classrooms because it is through such opportunities that students use target language, which is essential and necessary for their language development. Crabbe (2003) further suggests that focusing on opportunities gives the teacher more flexibility and a chance to think about "what opportunities or interaction opportunities learners are likely to need and how feedback opportunities will be built in" (p. 22) instead of "task" or "group work" or "activities that work best" which might hinder adaptability or creativity. Furthermore,

> learning opportunity is a term that is neutral as to who seeks or provides the opportunities, unlike terms such as instruction or delivery, and as to where those opportunities might be available. This aspect of the concept allows a teacher to consider the learner's role in seeking opportunities and the teacher's role in encouraging that opportunity seeking. In short, the notion of opportunity is compatible with the goal of supporting and fostering learner autonomy within instructional curricula. (Crabbe, 2003, p. 22)

In his opportunity framework, Crabbe (2003) lists several opportunity categories:

> receiving extensive input, participating in interaction, producing extensive output, rehearsing language forms and communicative routines, getting direct or indirect feedback on performance, and having access to knowledge about language and about language learning (p. 19).

Crabbe warns the readers that the list is not definitive and further recognizes and emphasizes individual differences, affect, style and prior experience of learning, and motive in particular, in the take-up of the opportunities available.

In Crabbe's opportunity framework (2003, 2007), it seems that it is the learner who is responsible for getting access to the learning opportunities. However, Crabbe misses an important element, power relations. Gaining access to learning opportunities in a social setting is not limited to individual characteristics such as being shy or lacking self-confidence. Social and power relations with others also play an important role and impact opportunities and access. Norton's work (2000) on five immigrant women's language learning experiences found that although the immigrant women were highly motivated and worked in an environment where opportunities to speak English with native speakers were available, their access to these opportunities was often denied because the native speakers whom they were in contact with were not welcoming and avoided interacting with them. In an ESL classroom setting, I argue that power differentials as well as affective factors influence learners' turn taking and participation and therefore their creating and gaining access to learning opportunities.

Power

Since my work heavily focuses on discourse, it is impossible not to mention the concept of power given that power is manifested in interaction (van Dijk, 2008) and

"discourse is the site of power struggles" (Fairclough, 2001, p. 61). Furthermore, this study focuses on a particular classroom, and "classrooms, after all, are also sites of struggle, struggles that are about existence and power" (Davies, 2000, p. 144). In this study, by focusing on two important features of classroom discourse, power and language, my goal is to obtain a richer and deeper understanding of ESL classroom events and participation.

van Dijk (2008) defines power "in terms of control, that is control of one group over other groups and their members" (p. 9) or control of one individual over another or others by constraining the contributions of non-powerful participants or their access to goods and resources (Fairclough, 2001; Rex & Schiller, 2009). In a classroom setting, this might mean how and why certain students gain control over the actions of others or gain access to learning opportunities while others cannot. A very important point here is that power is not in one individual's or group's possession, but it always circulates among people in social contexts, as suggested by Foucault (1980):

> Power is not to be taken to be a phenomenon of one individual's consolidated and homogenous domination over others, or that of one group or class over others. What, by contrast, should always be kept in mind is that power, if we do not take too distant a view of it, is not that which makes the difference between those who exclusively possess and retain it, and those who do not have it and submit to it. Power must be analysed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It's never localized here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and excercised through a net-like organization. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and excercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are always also the elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application. (p. 98)

In this study, my focus is on how individuals, through discourse, create and circulate power and how power results in domination or differential access – if any – to classroom discourse or learning opportunities. I use the word "domination" to refer to "inequities, injustice, and inequality, that is, all forms of illegitimate actions and situations" (van Dijk, 2008, p. 18). Individuals respond to dominance or resistance by trying to expand their capital (Kumaravadivelu, 1999). Capital, in French theorist Bourdieu's terms, can be economic, social, or cultural, and therefore is a form of power. van Dijk argues that knowledge resources, such as "economic capital" or "cultural capital" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 243) one might have result in symbolic power and therefore preferential access or control over others or vice versa. Symbolic power in language classrooms is therefore important given that it might impact access to learning opportunities or classroom discourse.

Power is not inherently bad or problematic (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2002; Rex & Schiller, 2009; van Dijk, 2008). As van Dijk suggests, "power obviously and trivially can be used for many neutral or positive ends". Indeed, in a classroom setting, a learner can have power "when she or he demonstrates independence, ownership, or self efficacy" (Rex & Schiller, 2009, p. 35) which are not bad at all. In classrooms, it is unlikely to fully eliminate power differentials, but it is possible that power relations can be changed for the better through increased awareness and careful adjustment in classroom events (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2002).

Fairclough (2001) and van Dijk (2008) also differentiate between two different aspects of power. van Dijk states that a number of discourse analysts are interested in

macro structures of societal power, other analysts, mostly sociolinguists, are interested in the micro level and micro analysis of power, individual agency in particular. Fairclough calls the former *power behind discourse* while the latter *power in discourse*. Although I do not deny the influence of social structures in everyday interaction, my focus is not on the macro in this research. I discuss power in face-to-face, spoken discourse only because in a setting where students belong to different ethnic groupings, a researcher either needs extensive exposure to the histories and cultures of participants or should come from the same societal background in order to fully make sense of how macro impacts the micro. A lack of understanding of societal forms only leads to misinterpretations of micro-level discourse. It is with this awareness that I minimize my interpretation of the macro in this study.

Competence

Another term that frequently appears in my analysis of data in this study is competence, which comes in different forms. The concept of communicative competence (CC) was first defined by Hymes in 1966 and has its theoretical origins both in transformational generative grammar and ethnography of communication. Hymes, as contrasted with Chomsky's (1957) strong view of (linguistic) competence which included only the knowledge of grammatical structures, proposed a broader definition and argued that CC refers to the knowledge of social and cultural norms and a person's ability to realize and use those rules in actual speech. Hymes' theory of CC included the interaction of grammatical (knowledge of grammar rules), psycholinguistic (whether something is feasible in terms of human information processing), sociocultural (whether something is

appropriate in a given social context) and probabilistic (whether something is performed and its outcomes) competencies. In defining sociolinguistic competence, Hymes emphasized the importance of 'appropriateness' of an utterance in a given context (form-function relationship). Cazden (2011) criticized Hymes, arguing that the concept of 'appropriateness" should be questioned as the term "begs the question of whose norms and why they should be adhered to" (p. 367).

Following Hymes, various scholars (e.g., Bachman, 1990; Celce-Murcia et. al., 1995; Canale & Swain, 1980; Savignon, 1997) reconceptualized and redefined the concept of CC in a second language. For example, Savignon (1976) highlighted the importance of cultural context and non-linguistic elements or cues, such as facial expressions and distance, and claimed that CC is not how a native speaker says something but it includes the knowledge about what to say and when to say it. A more comprehensive model of CC was developed by Canale and Swain (1980), who focused on the interaction between grammatical and sociolinguistic competence and made a distinction between competence (knowledge of grammar) and performance (actual use or the realization of competencies).

An alternative concept to CC was offered by Kramsch (1986), who proposed Interactional Competence (IC) which she defined as a person's ability to organize his or her thoughts in speech while interacting with others, and stated that there is variation in an individual's oral performance from one discursive activity to another. Kramsch suggested that teachers should teach discourse skills to language learners so that they may adapt to new cultural settings and different contexts. CC emphasizes the skills an

individual has and should use in a communicative situation while IC puts the emphasis on all individuals who co-construct communicative and discourse skills. In a participatory situation, those skills are specific to that discursive practice and may either apply or not apply to a different practice.

My understanding of competence builds on what has been suggested so far by the scholars whose models I have reviewed above. Therefore, my understanding of competence is broad and when I use the term in this study, I refer to a variety of competencies an individual has, including but not limited to interactional, linguistic, and discourse, which are shaped in social interaction. Competencies students bring into language classrooms are important because they impact the level of their participation and learning. Therefore, a clear understanding of ESL learners' competencies and how those competencies develop and are shaped over time are important.

Summary

My main theoretical assumption in this research is that identities are constructed in the ways people position themselves and are positioned by others in and through discourse. These positional identities, shaped by story lines including one's cultural and subjective experience, emerge naturally from social interactions. This assumption is supported by positioning theory, which adopts a microanalysis to understand how individuals shape the discourse and are shaped by the discourse through positions that they take on. The positions are dynamic as opposed to static roles. Positioning theory is interested in

a) the moral positions of the participants and the rights and duties they have to say certain things,

b) the conversational history and the sequence of things already being said,
c) the actual sayings with their power to shape certain aspects of the social world. (Davies & Harré, 1999, p. 6)

In any story line, power relations exist. Like story lines, power also influences and is influenced by positions people take up. Power is exercised and circulated while people position themselves and others. In a classroom setting, understanding these complex relationships among power, discourse, and positioning becomes more necessary as the interaction among them always impacts students' access to learning opportunities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review explores three areas of research: social context in SLA, positioning and identity, and ESL classroom participation. The review is guided by the following questions:

1) How does research about social context inform us about second language learning?
2) What does the literature on classroom participation say about ESL learning?
3) What does research tell us about positioning, negotiation of positional identities, and second language learning?

Social Context and Second Language Learning

Walsh (2011) discusses two views of second language learning. He states that several people regard learning a language as "acquiring an ever-expanding repertoires of new skills and knowledge" (p. 49). This kind of learning, Walsh suggests, is seeing learning as 'having'. An alternative view, as he discusses, considers language learning as "doing". Under this view:

> Learning is regarded as a process, an activity, something we take part in, perform. Learning is regarded as a dynamic, constantly shifting process in which participants collectively construct meanings. Learning is not something we have or own, it is something that we participate in – it entails encounters with others. Learning is regarded much more as a social rather than a cognitive process. Our actions, activities and interactions with others all work together to determine what it is that we learn. Learning entails completing a task, taking part in an activity, talking, discussing, debating and arguing with others. (p. 49)

It is this view of language learning that I adopt in this study for two reasons. First, there is enough empirical evidence in the fields of SLA and applied linguistics that indicates that second language acquisition does not simply happen in the mind or brain of

the learners, nor can language learning be merely a function of the input or the language that learners are exposed to. L2 learning goes beyond acquiring grammar rules of the target language or mastering its vocabulary. L2 learning is a social phenomenon embedded in social context and cultural knowledge which is required for appropriate language use (Wenger, 1998; Norton, 2000; Pavlenko, 2002; Saville-Troike, 2006). Second, focusing on the "doing" dimension, as Walsh (2011) suggests, is "something we can study, analyse, and evaluate" (p. 49). As Walsh further argues:

> We cannot look inside the heads of our students and see what they are learning. We *can* look at what they say, how they interact, how they use the L2 and so on; this is where we can really begin to uncover some of the finer nuances of learning as a process. Under this view of learning, studying interaction, quite simply, is the same thing as studying learning. (p. 50)

Similarly, Pavlenko and Norton (2007) claim that learning is a "situated process of participation in particular communities of practice, which may entail the negotiation of ways of being a person in that context" (p. 669). Given the importance of participation in social context in understanding language learning, I now turn my attention to studies that investigated the role of social context in L2 learning.

The fields of SLA and Applied Linguistics have experienced a social turn within the past twenty years with increasing attention towards socially oriented traditions such as sociocultural theory (e.g., Penuel & Wertsch, 1995), critical sociolinguistics (e.g., Firth & Wagner, 1997; Kumaravadivelu, 1999), and feminist poststructural theory (e.g., Norton, 2000). These approaches have challenged the traditional and longstanding views of second language acquisition. The social turn has allowed SLA researchers and applied linguists to focus on notions such as self, discourse, and identity (Mantero, 2007). These

researchers have become interested in how the differences of social contexts, group membership, and identities of L2 users mediate, influence, and determine "*what* is learned, *how* it is acquired, and *why* some learners are more successful than others?" (Saville-Troike, 2006, p. 99).

Research on social context in the field of SLA and applied linguistics can be grouped into two categories according to approaches used: macro and micro. Researchers adopting a macro-analysis focused on society as a whole, explored issues between L1 and L2 groups (e.g., Chihara & Oller, 1978; Clement & Kruidenier, 1983; Cooper & Fishman, 1977; Gardner & Clement, 1990; Gardner & Lambert, 1959; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Lukmani, 1972; Oller, Baca, and Vigil, 1979; Shaw, 1981), and investigated issues such as motivation, (e.g., Gardner & Lambert, 1959), fear of assimilation in the dominant culture (e.g., Ting-Toomey, 1999), and modes of acculturation (e.g., Schumann, 1978a, 1978b, 1986). Various theories aiming to explain the relations between L2 learners and the L1 community also appeared such as speech accommodation theory (Beebe, 1988; Giles, 1977; Giles, Taylor, and Bourhis, 1973), ethnolinguistic identity theory (Bourhis and Giles, 1977; Giles and Johnson, 1981, 1987) as well as the inter-group model (Giles and Byrne, 1982). Most of the research adopting a macro analysis of social context concentrated on the construction of the self with regard to group membership and social context and aimed to understand the development and negotiation of an ethnolinguistic identity (Mantero, 2007). Researchers adopting a macro-perspective argued that socio-structural factors influence motivation, self confidence

(e.g., Clement, 1986), and positive attitudes as well as opportunities for contact between learners and L2 speakers, which, in turn, influences L2 learning.

Over the past two decades, research in the areas of social psychology, interactional sociolinguistics, and sociocultural theory have contributed to a more critical view of L2 learning, which has been called a post-structural paradigm of SLA. One of the leading scholars in this area is Norton (2000). Norton's study on identity and L2 learning shifted SLA research in a new theoretical direction by focusing on the micro and adopting an interactional perspective. Norton argued that inequitable power relationships in local contexts, rather than factors such as strong identification with the L1 group, low motivation, or personality traits (e.g., extroverted vs. introverted), may limit opportunities for learners to interact with L2 speakers. Scholars like Norton, adopting a micro approach, focused on the individual in particular situations aiming to understand the social and power relations between individual L2 learners and their interlocutors in social interactions. They argued that second language acquisition should be evaluated in "its social, cultural, political contexts, taking into account gender, race, and other relations of power as well as the notion of the subject as multiple and formed within different discourses" (Pennycook, 1990, p. 26).

I situate this study in the context of the post-structural SLA focusing on "individuals" in local contexts. I adopt a post-structuralist approach to L2 learning because this paradigm allows us to examine:

> how linguistic, social, cultural, gender, and ethnic identities of L2 users, on the one hand, structure access to linguistic resources and interactional opportunities and, on the other, are constituted and reconstituted in the process of L2 learning and use. (Pavlenko, 2002, p. 283)

Poststructuralism also allows multiplicity and complexity. It enables us to move away from "a dogmatic approach to the deconstruction of binary oppositions" (McKinney & Norton, 2010 p. 196) such as teacher/student, white/black, native/non-native, or masculine/feminine and instead helps us focus on

> issues of diversity or difference on multiple levels and to explore the intersections of different elements of difference – e.g., race, class, and gender – while also acknowledging that these intersections are not static and will differ according to subjects and specific contexts (McKinnery & Norton, 2010, p. 196).

ESL/ELL's Classroom Participation and Second Language Learning

Whenever I use the term participation in this project, I will be referring, broadly, to L2 learners' taking part in classroom activities and discussions. As Buzzelli and Johnston (2011) claim, classroom participation is "rife with potential cultural mismatches and misunderstandings" (p. 89) and a knowledge of English does not necessarily equip students for the participation.

The literature on ESL/ELLs' classroom participation has particularly focused on the reluctance and resistance shown by ESL or ELLs in ESL/EFL classrooms/programs (e.g., Chen, 2003; Day, 1984; Skilton-Sylvester, 2002; Zhang, X., & Head, K., 2010), mainstream classrooms (e.g., Duff, 2002; Toohey, 1998) and university/college settings (e.g., Fitze, 2006; Morell, 2007; Morita, 2004). A number of studies have shown that silence or resistance experienced by L2 learners in these settings is associated with gender (Skilton-Sylvester, 2002). For example, Losey (1995) described and analyzed differences in student output across ethnicity and gender in a mixed monolingual English and bilingual Spanish/English class in order to understand how L2 oral language skills

were developed in a mixed classroom. An analysis by gender demonstrated that Mexican American men contributed four times the amount expected, whereas Mexican American women spoke only half as much as expected in whole-class discussions. Losey pointed to the social status of Mexican American women as "double minorities" as the main reason for their silence in whole-class interactions. Similar findings were reported by Shehadeh (1994) who compared same-gender dyadic interactions to mixed-gender interactions in an ESL classroom. He found that the same gender dyadic interactions provided better contexts for females to repair their errors and produce comprehensible output whereas group mixed-gender interaction provided better contexts for males to request clarifications, repair errors, and produce comprehensible output.

Another reason reported by various scholars for resistance, silence, or speech reluctance in language classrooms is language anxiety experienced by learners (e.g. Cheng, Horwitz, & Schallert, 2000; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Philips, 1992; Young, 1990). A related concept, which is claimed to have potential impact on L2 speaking, is willingness to communicate (WTC) which refers to "the state or level of one's readiness to enter a discourse at a particular time with a person or persons using L2" (MacIntyre et al, 1998, p. 547). MacIntyre et al (1998) investigated the role of motivation on students' WTC behaviors and demonstrated that students who have more positive attitudes and motivation were more willing to communicate in the target language, had higher perceptions of perceived competence, lower levels of anxiety and communicated more in the L2. They suggested that in order to increase WTC in language classrooms, the level of anxiety experienced by language learners should be reduced.

Results of Yashima's study (2002) were consistent with the findings of MscIntyre et al (1998). When Japanese learners in Yashima's study were motivated and self confident, they were also willing to communicate in their EFL classroom.

In addition to affective factors and individual differences, level of linguistic proficiency (Cheng, 2000; Jones, 1999) as well as cultural background (Jones, 1999) have also been reported in explaining L2 learners' classroom participation, in particular, their silence.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, researchers have focused on power relations in classrooms and provided descriptions of the classroom contexts and speech events in understanding classroom participation. Their findings have been eye opening in terms of demonstrating how English language learners were positioned in English dominant discourse communities in ways that native speaker peers or teachers limited their access to classroom discussions and activities (e.g., Bashir-Ali, 2006; DaSilva-Iddings 2005; Duff, 2002; Hunter, 1997; McKay & Wong, 1996; Miller, 2000).

Although the previous research has largely focused on silent or marginalized learners, little attention has been given to outspoken students who dominate classroom conversations. Dominant voices concern classroom teachers as well as silent students. In order for classrooms to provide equal opportunities and space to negotiate identities and subject matter knowledge in culturally respectful and equitable ways (Duff, 2002), not only silent but also "dominant" voices should be examined closely and critically.

Positioning, Identity, and Second Language Learning

Drawing on Gee (2008) and Norton (2000), I define identity as multiple presentations of self which are (re)constructed in and through social interaction across social contexts and demonstrated through actions and emotions. I adopt a post-structural view of identity. The post-structural identity is multifaceted, fluid, dynamic, a site of struggle, and shaped by power relations amongst speech communities and individuals. That is, our identities are "micro-genetically performed and consolidated" and therefore they can be "micro-analytically accessed" (Korobov & Bamberg, 2004, p. 476).

While people form or construct identities as they wish to be perceived by others, sometimes they take on identities imposed on or assigned to them by other people. They constantly ask the question "are the perceptions that others have of me true, and do they reflect what I know to be true of myself?" (Mantero, 2007, p. 4). Identity negotiation occurs when people are expected to take on or reshape their identities. This negotiation is indeed influenced by a variety of factors such as "the repertoire and importance of social identities that a person has, the setting in which one is located, and the actions and influence of other people in those settings" (Deaux, 2001, p. 9). When the negotiation is successful, people may form new identities or (re)construct their existing selves. These identities are validated as we position ourselves or are positioned by others across time and settings. That is, "as people negotiate identities, they take-up, assert, and resist identity positions that define them" (Reeves, 2008; p. 35) For example, Martina, one of the participants in Norton's study (2000) was socially positioned as an immigrant woman in her work setting in Canada where she felt uncomfortable speaking English with native

speakers and positioned herself as "stupid" and "inferior". However, as a mother, she successfully used English against false claims by her landlord in order to protect the rights of her family, for whom she was responsible. In different contexts, Martina positioned herself differently. In one, she was clearly defining herself as inferior, while in another she asserted herself as a successful user of English. Therefore, her roles, power relations, and contextual conditions all played a role in her taking-up, asserting, or resisting identity positions.

The fields of SLA and Applied Linguistics have seen an increasing number of studies on identities of L2 learners (See Block, 2009; Ricento, 2005) and language teachers in the past two decades. Since my focus in this study is on learners, rather than teachers, I will not review studies that explored different aspects of teacher identity. Identity research has mostly used ethnographic case studies to explore how L2 users form and negotiate identities in work settings (e.g., Gordon, 2004; Kim, 2007) as well as classroom or school environments (e.g., Burkhalter & Pisciotta, 1999; Duff, 2002; Li, 2007; Liang, 2006; Marshall, 2010; Miller, 2007; Waterstone, 2008; Talmy, 2008). The majority of identity research explored how learners negotiated multiple and sometimes contradictory identities with regard to the L2 writing process and the process of learning to write (e.g., Abasi, Akbari, & Graves, 2006; Fernsten, 2008; Li, 2007; Lvovich, 2003; Waterstone, 2008). Another major area focused on assimilation, resistance, and rejection (Pavlenko, 2002). For example, Bashir-Ali (2006), in an ethnographic study, reported that a female student from Mexico went to extreme measures in an attempt to assimilate in the dominant social culture of her school. Bashir-Ali (2006) indicated how one Mexican

female refused to speak her native language in public, distanced herself from other students of her own Mexican ethnic background, and insisted on being identified as an African American in order to become part of a collective powerful social identity in that school. Similar findings were found by McKay and Wong (1996) who demonstrated how Chinese students resisted their powerless positions as "ESL learners" and tried to reposition themselves.

Numerous scholars whose work is situated in post-structural SLA research have examined how identities were formed and negotiated in local contexts in moment-by-moment development of interaction. In order to understand identity negotiation, they explored how learners positioned themselves and others with certain rights and obligations through conversation. However, although growing in number, positioning studies still constitute a small portion of identity research in the fields of SLA and applied linguistics. Initial applications of positioning in classroom settings has appeared in mainstream classrooms in primary and secondary schools. Therefore I will first review studies conducted in primary and secondary schools that explored or used positioning.

Positioning in Mainstream Classrooms

Studies using the concept of positioning provided insights into classroom participation outside of language learning environments. Studies in mainstream classrooms have mostly focused on social positioning and explored how social positions of students who come from certain backgrounds have been constructed in classroom activities and how those positions interacted with their learning. For example, Antwan and Chris, two African American students in Maloch's study (2005), were positioned as

passive and incompetent by their classmates as these students did not recognize Antwan and Chris's conversational moves, which seemed to be inconsistent with the norms of the classroom. However, their social positions changed positively over time. Antwan and Chris were ultimately able to manage to be recognized as legitimate participants due to the teacher's strategic and timely scaffolding.

Another group of studies explored gender positioning and how gender relations were played out in classroom settings. Ritchie (2002) used Positioning Theory to interpret social interactions of Year 6 students in science activities. Opportunities for learning science were denied to two female students because they did not negotiate productive story lines within their groups. Similar gendered positioning was portrayed in Clarke's study (2005), which used an analysis of literature circle discussions to demonstrate how story lines empowered the girls' literacy development while disempowering the literacy development of boys in a fifth-grade classroom. Clarke's study is particularly important and eye-opening in terms of challenging a static, salient male/female dichotomy but seeing gender as a multifaceted and complex social construct that intersects with other factors like status and power. In a related study, Anderson (2009) showed how Nate, a fifth-grade student, was marginalized and denied opportunities by his group members during math activities.

Similar to these studies, a number of scholars have conducted detailed analyses of social interactions and positionings of L2 learners in various classroom contexts. What follows in the next two sections is an overview of positioning studies conducted in mainstream and ESL classrooms.

Positioning of ELLs in Mainstream Classrooms

A number of researchers explored the asymmetric power relations between English language learners (ELLs) and domestic students in primary and secondary schools. These studies have indicated that ELLs were marginalized and denied access to learning opportunities in mainstream classrooms for two main reasons.

First, marginalization has been found to occur due to ELLs' limited proficiency level. Negative identities are assigned to ELLs as learners with learning deficits, which negatively impact their learning and attitudes toward school and classroom practices (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007). One striking example was provided by Pavlenko and Norton (2007). In a Canadian public school, a Japanese learner of English is positioned negatively once a classmate yells at her, "Are you deaf or ESL?" (p. 43). This and similar incidents indicate how English speaking students might impose "linguistic domination by denying access to classroom social practices to those who do not have the linguistic capital and consequently condemn them to silence" (Ajayi, 2006, p. 475). For example, Ajayi (2006) reported that English-only students dominated and ridiculed Hispanic middle school students, which was clearly evident in an essay by one student who wrote, "In my experience about speaking English, it's bad because when I start to learn English a lot of kids laugh about how do I speak" (p. 475). For these students, the opportunities to practice language were severely limited. Similarly, Miller (2000) reported that Asian immigrant students lost the chance to speak English in their classes in an Australian high school despite their efforts to participate in class discussion and activities. These students were not understood by their Australian classmates due to their non-native accents.

Because the Australian classmates were unwilling to talk to them, these students had limited opportunities and access to learning and became isolated.

Second, ELLs are marginalized because of school practices (DaSilva Iddings & Katz, 2007). Duff (2002) depicted the cultural dominance of one group over another in two tenth grade social studies classes in Canada where she observed ESL learners' interactions with their peers. Although teaching practices including pop-culture and other textual and media based references engaged and united local students and gave them opportunities to display and construct their identities and share their interests and experiences, these practices excluded most of the ESL learners who were unfamiliar with these cultural tools. Thus, the choice and practices within the curriculum positioned them as outsiders or outcasts. Similarly, a study conducted by Hunter (1997) portrayed the multiple and conflicting identities of a Portuguese child, Roberto, who was positioned as an outsider as the contents of his writing did not match the interests of other boys' stories in a 4th grade classroom – his family-centered topics contrasted with their media-based fantasy adventures. However, Roberto was able to become an accepted member of his gender group in 5th grade when new students joined the class and collaborated with him on writings which included pop-culture elements.

Besides non-ELLs, classroom teachers influence identity construction or negotiation of ELLs. In a number of studies, teachers were observed to assign unwanted identities to ELLs (e.g., "low learners" in DaSilva-Iddings, 2005; "worst" students in Harklau, 2000). These studies, overall, indicated that although learners may resist an assigned identity by their teachers, ELLs in mainstream classrooms have limited power to

do so (Harklau, 2000; Reeves, 2008).

For example, DaSilva-Iddings (2005) provided us with a clear picture of how ELLs were positioned in an English dominant discourse community and how native speaker peers and general education teachers limited their access to classroom practices including classroom discussions and activities. Constantly oppressed and marginalized by their native speaker peers and positioned as 'low learners' by one of their teachers, these second grade students could not gain the same rights to participate as the local students.

Yoon (2007, 2008) analyzed how regular classroom teachers' views of their roles with regards to ELLs interacted with ELLs' learning. Two sixth grade and one seventh grade English teachers' views of their roles with regards to ELLs affected their teaching practices, pedagogical approaches, and ELLs' different participatory behaviors. These teachers positioned themselves as teachers for all students, teachers for regular education students, and teachers for a single subject. Their varying perceptions of themselves as teachers positioned ELLs in different ways. For example, Mrs. Young provided ELLs with learning opportunities by drawing them into literacy activities, encouraged their participation by inviting them to share their experiences, and addressed their cultural and linguistic differences in meaningful ways. Her positive attitudes and beliefs towards ELLs as well as classroom practices not only positively shaped her teaching but also mainstream students' perceptions toward ELLs. As a result, mainstream peers positioned ELLs as resourceful and intellectual, rather than powerless and inferior. Such positioning assigned by their classmates increased ELLs' participation and interaction in the class. In contrast, the other teachers, Mr. Brown and Mrs. Taylor, who believed that teaching

ELLs was not their main responsibility, played a passive role in supporting their needs. As a result, Mr. Brown's mainstream students resisted accepting ELLs as legitimate partners, and Mrs. Taylor's students showed indifference towards the ELLs. In brief, the ELLs' positioning of themselves as powerful or powerless fluctuated depending on their interactive positioning, with teachers taking the leading role and students mirroring teachers' attitudes.

In a related study, by analyzing teacher identity negotiation through positioning theory and the concept of investment, Reeves (2008) analyzed the case of a secondary English teacher in the United States, Neal, who negotiated identity positions for himself while assigning positions to his students. Neal positioned himself as a natural and highly competent teacher while he positioned ELLs like any other student, which resulted in his refusal to make linguistic accommodation for ELLs during instruction. Reeves argues that Neal's stance on ELLs and undifferentiated instruction are indicative of an assimilative approach in the education of ELLs and concludes that while positioning ELLs like every other student is problematic, so, too, could be the positioning of them as "dramatically different from other students".

Positioning in ESL Classroom Settings

When compared to other fields of education, the number of studies that employed Positioning Theory in second/foreign language contexts, especially in ESL classroom settings, is extremely scarce. One of the first researchers to examine positioning in an ESL classroom was Menard-Warwick (2008), who analyzed how social positioning was manifested in ESL classroom discourse and appeared to affect language learning. In her

study, the participant teacher did not assess her students' prior knowledge and experiences before preparing class material to teach employment skills. In providing them with pre-determined skills and implying particular roles for the learners, the teacher had already assigned them a particular identity or status. For example, Fabiana, the learner who self-identified as a businesswoman, rejected the skills of cooking and fixing a car, but was unsure how to express her business-specific skills in English when her teacher, who had contrary assumptions about her students, asked her to explain it. Eventually, Fabiana's ambitious attempts to position herself as a 'businesswoman" got lost in the teacher's non-comprehension, which consequently undermined Fabiana's power in the interaction.

In her study, Miller (2007) illustrated how positioning as good/poor language learner or teacher was made possible in the moment-by-moment interactions in an ESL classroom she herself taught. Miller looked at the particular ways the participants, including herself as the classroom teacher, were repeatedly positioned in their interactions. One of the student-participants, Song, managed to be positioned in relatively powerful ways as a "language learner" by using her knowledge of basic grammar terms such as "past tense", "adjective" or "present perfect", her recognition of grammar rules, and her knowledge of English vocabulary as a way to display herself as competent. By displaying knowledge and correcting other students' English, Song positioned herself as a successful student. On the other hand, another student, Tenzin, seemed slower to catch on and more confused than the others in the language practice activities. Other students seemed to notice his difficulty and consequently positioned him as less competent and

assigned him a role as poor language learner. Peng, the third student in Miller's study, used his work experiences as a resource for positioning himself as a good student in the classroom talk.

In summary, although limited in number, the existing research on positioning indicates the effectiveness of micro-analysis of classroom discourse in gaining a better understanding of who our students are and how students negotiate participation, positional identities, and power in classroom settings.

Conclusions

The fields of SLA and Applied Linguistics have experienced a social turn within the past twenty years with increasing attention towards socially oriented traditions such as sociocultural theory (e.g., Penuel & Wertsch, 1995), critical sociolinguistics (e.g., Firth & Wagner, 1997; Kumaravadivelu, 1999), and feminist poststructural theory (e.g., Norton, 2000). The social turn has challenged the traditional and longstanding views of SLA and allowed researchers to focus on notions such as self, discourse, and identity (Mantero, 2007). Numerous scholars whose work is situated in post-structural SLA research have examined how identities were negotiated in local contexts, in moment-by-moment development of interaction. In order to understand identity negotiation, they explored how learners positioned themselves and others, with certain rights and obligations, through conversation in local contexts. With an increasing attention on local context, the term positioning, referring to a momentarily dynamic construction of identities, gained more attention.

Drawing on positioning theory by Davies and Harré (1990), a number of scholars conducted micro-analysis of classroom discourse to explore social or gender positioning (e.g., Menard-Warwick, 2008) in classrooms and how such positioning impacts students' classroom participation. The traditional research on classroom participation had focused on the individual and highlighted affective factors, individual differences, level of linguistic proficiency and cultural backgrounds in understanding students' participation.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, researchers have focused on power relations in classrooms and provided descriptions of the classroom contexts and speech events for understanding classroom participation. Their findings have been eye-opening in terms of demonstrating how English language learners were positioned in English dominant discourse communities in ways that native speaker peers or teachers limited their access to classroom discussions and activities (e.g., Bashir-Ali, 2006; DaSilva-Iddings 2005; Duff, 2002; Hunter, 1997; McKay & Wong, 1996; Miller, 2000). They have reported that students' sociocultural backgrounds, gender, course content, and teacher/student beliefs impacted students' positionings and social status in class, the development of their social identities, and their classroom participation. Particularly in mainstream classrooms, classroom teachers or peers negatively positioned English language learners (ELLs), as ELLs spoke limited English and were not familiar with the pop-culture around which the classroom activities centered. Those researchers (e.g., Menard-Warwick, 2008; Miller, 2007) argued that language learning and positioning occur simultaneously in classrooms, and teachers can best facilitate learning when they constantly assign powerful positions to learners and provide them with multiple opportunities. This way, ESL students or ELLs

can positively construct their L2 voices, which is important for their academic and language socializations.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS OF INQUIRY

In this dissertation, drawing on positioning theories, I was guided by the following research questions:

1) How does positioning occur in an IEP ESL classroom and how does such positioning facilitate or hinder classroom participation?
2) How do the ESL learners negotiate positional identities, power, competence, and participation in classroom activities?
3) How does positioning interact with English language learning?

To address these questions, I combined a qualitative case study approach with discourse analysis. I open this chapter with a rationale for the methods chosen and then provide a description of the research setting and participants as well as data collection and analysis procedures. I also devote some space to discuss the trustworthiness of my data and my position as a researcher.

Qualitative Case Study Approach

This is a qualitative case study that uses techniques of discourse analysis to understand positioning in an ESL classroom. Since my goal was to explore positioning in a particular context as well as to describe unique circumstances, particular events, actions, and meanings specific to that context, a qualitative approach was most appropriate for my study. Only through qualitative inquiry, *explaining* the interaction between positioning and second language learning, *describing* the classroom context in which positioning occurred, and *interpreting* the experiences of a small number of

learners as well as classroom events and situations, in which positioning possibly had no single set of outcomes, were possible.

Among a number of philosophical orientations and approaches to qualitative research, I found interpretative and post-modern perspectives particularly relevant and helpful for my study. I employed interpretive lenses because I was not only interested in the physical events or behaviors of my participants but also in understanding how *they* made sense of those events and behaviors that they were involved in, how *they* interpreted what they experienced, and how *their understanding* influenced their behavior (Maxwell, 2005; Merriam, 2009; Yin 2009). My main concern was to make sense of all these from *the perspectives of participants*. For example, I was curious to understand the experiences of being an active, dominant, silent, etc. second language learner from the perspectives of those who either interactively or reflexively took up such positions. In addition to interpretative lenses, I employed a post-structural inquiry to "disrupt the dichotomies" (Merriam, 2009, p. 12). That means I entered into the research setting by avoiding pre-determined notions such as 'quiet student', 'competent learner', etc. My aim was to understand and present "multiple perspectives, multiple voices, and multiple interpretations" (Merriam, 2009, p. 12) of what it meant to be, for example, an active student in one context and passive in another and how those positions emerged from conversations over time.

Two-case case study design

Among various research traditions in qualitative study, I chose to do a "two-case case study" (Yin, 2009) of two individual students to gain an in-depth understanding of

the complexity and peculiarity of their positioning, negotiations of power, competence, and participation, and their second language learning experiences in their "bounded system" (Yin, 2009) which included classroom events and activities. After spending some time in the research setting, I deliberately and inductively selected two students as cases. I chose them based on preliminary hypotheses that emerged during my ongoing analysis of data. I made the decision after approximately eight weeks in the class when I was convinced by my data that two student participants could be focal as they demonstrated unique participation behavior. They represented both an extreme and a unique case and offered contrasting situations at some times (Yin, 2009). Therefore, they were both worth documenting and analyzing in depth.

My purpose in choosing a two-case case study method was not to test, confirm, or challenge current positioning theories, but to benefit from them while giving meaning to the focal participants' positioning and second language learning experiences in a particular classroom context. I chose two cases instead of a single case because these two cases also differed from each other in negotiating membership to the class. Defining these two single case studies as "longitudinal" (Yin, 2009) or developmental (Brown & Rogers, 2003) is appropriate given that I studied the same single cases over one academic semester in order to specify how two focal students' participation changed over time.

Discourse Analysis

This project heavily depends on discourse analysis as a qualitative research method to understand *social events* of a classroom as they unfolded as well as negotiation of positional identities. This was only possible by looking directly at the discourse, "not

at retrospective reports or second-hand data, or other forms of self-report" (Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. 26).

The term, *discourse*, has been defined in different ways across disciplines. The most common definition that can be found is "language in use". A number of scholars (e.g., Fairclough, 2001; Gee, 2008) suggest that it is insufficient to look only at language itself, but "language use conceived of as socially determined" (Fairclough, 2001, p. 18). Gee addresses this distinction by two concepts, discourse and Discourses; with the latter referring not just to the language or the content of what people say, but who says it and how it is said and what the person does when saying it. The saying-doing combination is therefore important. It is this understanding of Discourses that I will be using in this study although I will refer to it as discourse with a lower case and in singular form. Accordingly, my focus is not only on the language itself, but "language used to do something and mean something, language produced and interpreted in a real-world context" (Cameron, 2001, p. 13). My aim is "to do more than just decode the meaning of the words" and instead "work out how the speaker intends us to take the utterance" (Cameron, 2001, p. 48). I use language-in-use to "ask who is using language and other semiotic tools to do what, with whom, to whom, when, where, and how?" (Bloome, et al., 2008, p. 3). My focus is on the practice, on the phenomena constructed and shaped in the discourse, and on the actions being accomplished (Wood & Kroger, 2000). Therefore, I concentrate on "the social functions of the linguistic features, not on the linguistic features in their own right" (Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. 23). I pay attention not only to

what my participants said but how they said it as well as the consequences to gain additional insight into the way they understand things (Cameron, 2001).

Analyzing classroom discourse is important for various reasons. First, since classroom teachers play an essential role in creating and managing classroom discourse, it is necessary for them to gain " 'microscopic understandings' (van Lier 2000) of the interactional organization of the L2 classroom" (Walsh, 2011, p. 51) so that they can make good interactive decisions. Second, an analysis of classroom discourse helps us understand who our students are. Gee (2008) explains the tight connection between Discourses and identities, saying that "Discourses are ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking, and often reading and writing, that are accepted as instantiations of particular identities by specific groups" (p. 3) The discourse we produce is shaped by our multiple selves while at the same time discourse shapes our multiple identities. This understanding of discourse and its relation to personhood is consistent with poststructural discourse. As Davies (2000) suggests, "Poststructuralist discourse entails a move from the self as a noun (and thus stable and relatively fixed) to the self as a verb, always in process, taking its shape in and through the discursive possibilities through which selves are made" (p. 137). Third, examining classroom discourse can provide us with an understanding of how broad issues such as gender or culture are created in discourse because discourses may develop around a certain topic such as gender or class and compete with each other (Davies, 2000; Pavlenko, 2002). Discourse is a "multifaceted public process through which meanings are progressively and dynamically achieved" (Davies, 2000, p. 89).

By using discourse analysis in this study, I was able to get very close to what the participant teacher and students actually did in classroom events. Therefore, I was able to "build compelling, explanatory theories about classroom processes, social processes, reading, writing, and learning" (Bloome et al., 2008, p. 1) as they occurred in the classroom I observed. While doing this, I drew on different varieties of discourse analysis. When analyzing the interactional organization of classroom talk including but not limited to the structure of acceptances or refusals, forms of conversational repair and other methods of conversational alignment, and practices in the managements of turn-taking or arguments, I used Conversation Analysis (CA) (see Seedhouse, 2004), which is the most micro-analytic variety of discourse analysis (Wood & Kroger, 2000). This micro level approach to discourse analysis emphasizes "face-to-face interactions, the immediate situation, and local events" (Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. 20). Seedhouse (2004) suggests two principal aims for CA:

> One principal aim of CA is to characterize the organization of the interaction by abstracting from exemplars of specimens of interaction and to uncover the emic logic underlying the organization. […]. Another principal of CA is to trace the development of intersubjectivity in an action sequence. This does *not* mean that CA provides access to participants' cognitive or psychological states. Rather, it means that analysts trace how participants analyze and interpret each other's actions and develop a shared understanding of the progress of the interaction (p. 13).

By using CA as a technique, I critically examined interactional organization (e.g., turn taking, repair, adjacency pairs) of classroom discourse, which helped me understand who positioned whom and in what ways in "naturally occurring data" (Seedhouse, 2004, p. 15).

Another type of Discourse Analysis I used, although very minimally, was Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). I used CDA to understand how power circulated in the way it did among members of the classroom talk. Power is an important component of positioning and discourse processes always involve power relations (Bloome, et al., 2008). It is therefore impossible not to talk about power when the focus is on discourse. However, the use of CDA in this project is minimal because my main emphasis is on the micro rather than macro analysis of discourse.

Research Setting

I conducted my study in an ESL (high-intermediate/low advanced) oral skills class in an Academic Intensive English program (IEP) at an American University[1] which is located in a relatively small city in the southwestern United States. In the following section, I provide a description of the university, the IEP, and the classroom where the study was conducted.

The University

This study was conducted in a public, doctoral-granting institution. In the academic year when this study was conducted, there were 376 international students, representing 73 countries. From the total number of 31,179 enrolled students on campus, the international student body comprised only 1.21 % of the student population. While international undergraduate students comprised 0.61 % of the total undergraduate body, international graduate and professional students comprised 4.0 % of the total graduate body. The Indian student population was the largest on campus and included 84 students.

[1] All the names used throughout the study, including the names of research locations and participants, are pseudonyms.

Other large groups included students from East Asian countries such as Japan (37 students), China (31 students), and South Korea (24 students). Of the overall international student population, 211 were females and 165 were males. Since 2002, there has been a gradual decrease in the number of international students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate programs at the university. The majority of the international students lived off campus with roommates from their home countries.

During my research, I had the opportunity to see different parts of the campus (e.g., student union, cafes, main library, etc.) so that I was able to get to know the setting well. Walking around the campus, one could easily notice the lack of international student diversity. I also observed that international students associated mostly with their peers from their own countries, and I rarely saw international students with domestic students.

The Intensive English Program

The non-credit university Intensive English program (IEP) was housed on a single floor of an academic building. This floor included six classrooms. The program director, learning specialist, and one student worker shared an area where the director and the specialist had their small offices. This area also included a very small resource room where there were texts and office supplies for the use of teachers and another small room with technology equipment. On the same floor, there was a teachers' room that included five desks and two computers. Six teachers shared three desks. The program had nine ESL teachers.

The IEP offered international students the opportunity to improve their English language skills in preparation for attending the university. Although admission to the program did not guarantee admission to the university, IEP students were usually accepted into degree programs. The program was open to non-native English speakers who were at least 18 years old, but occasionally younger students were admitted on a case-by-case basis. Completion of secondary education was required to be eligible to attend this program. The program offered intensive instruction in grammar, listening comprehension, writing, conversation, pronunciation, reading, and American culture. The goal of the program was to help ESL learners with respect to academic, cultural, and test preparation. The program included five levels of classes within each of four skill areas. The levels were numbered from 1500 (high beginning) through 5500 (advanced). Most students would stay for the full semester (15 weeks in the fall and spring or 10 weeks in the summer), but some might attend only the first or second half. Once the students completed the advanced levels of all four IEP skill courses and earned a final grade of a B or higher in all, they met the language requirements of the graduate college and undergraduate admissions.

At the time of this research, the program had two tracks: The bridge and non-bridge programs. Students' attendance in these two programs was determined by the scores that they gained from standardized language tests such as the TOEFL or the IELT. The bridge program, a combination of academic study with intensive English courses for 1 to 2 semesters, was for students who had been conditionally admitted to the university. Students who wanted to study English for other purposes or to improve their English to

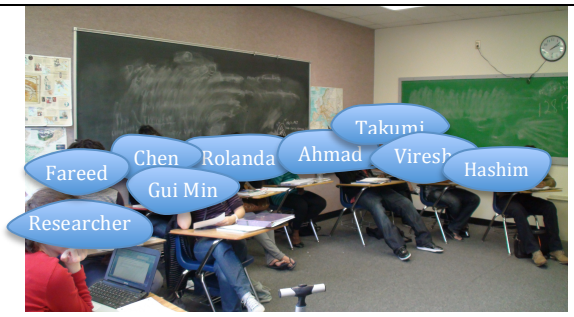
get into college were placed in the non-bridge program. In order to be placed appropriately in language classes, each student was required to take a placement test including an oral interview and a written test consisting of questions on grammar, reading, listening, and writing. Four courses, 1) grammar, 2) oral skills (listening, speaking, pronunciation), 3) writing, and 4) reading and American culture were offered in five different proficiency levels - from beginning to advanced. There were 10 to 15 students in each class. In addition to standardized and departmental tests, self-evaluations were also used to evaluate the success of the students.

The Oral Skills Class

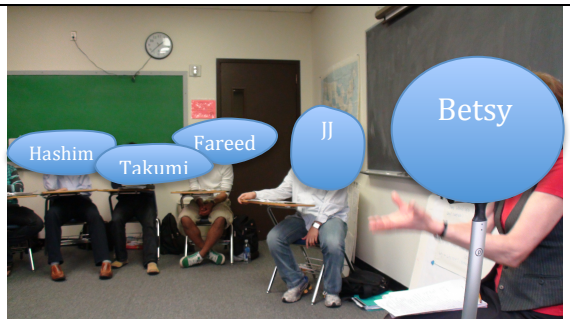
The class observed in this study was a high intermediate-low advanced oral skills class. The oral skills class was chosen because it was the most diverse class in terms of nationalities represented in the ESL program. The class size was neither too small nor too large to research. Additionally, the participant teacher was very experienced. She had over 30 years of experience in teaching ESL and was enthusiastic about this study. I thought that an oral skills class would be a better place to observe positioning than other courses offered in the program as there would be more "talk".

The class met Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. during one academic semester in a small classroom. There were large windows along one side of the room, three chalkboards, two world maps, 14 chairs for students, and one desk for the teacher. The teacher frequently used the chalkboards either to write new vocabulary or to tape up written prompts for activities. Their seatings changed during the semester. For example, although one focal participant sat next to me during the first eight weeks, he

moved to the other side of the room and sat opposite me for the last eight weeks. The lights were always on in the room because the tall trees outside the window shaded the classroom in the afternoon. Three snapshots of the classroom are provided in Figure 2.



Picture taken in late March, 2010.



Picture taken in early April, 2010.

Picture taken in early March, 2010. Participant teacher Betsy in front of her students and her desk at the corner, by the windows. (All the names are pseudonyms.)

Figure 2: Snapshots of the classroom

Before attending this particular level, students were expected to develop some fluency in conversational English. The goal of the oral skills class was to give learners experience in using English for academic purposes. It aimed to help them develop their listening and speaking so that they could be more effective in formal academic situations in the university environment. The class emphasized building skills for discussion, presentation, and note-taking. Activities were designed to offer multiple opportunities for students to build vocabulary, including practice with some idioms, and to improve

pronunciation and listening comprehension. Developing phonological awareness, grammar, spelling, and vocabulary was important. There were four major activities that students were engaged in throughout the semester. I briefly describe each below:

Formal Lectures

Formal lectures by the teacher involved teaching a new topic such as "how to take turns" or "cultural styles of interaction". The teacher usually used transparencies and an overhead projector as well as handouts that she gave to students. Occasionally, she used a textbook as a source to base her teaching. Her lectures also included review activities that tied back to the homework assignments. In review sessions, she often introduced or went over specific grammar rules, such as verb tenses or adjective use. Students usually worked in pairs or small groups before she went over the material with the whole class. When it was a whole-class review, Betsy did the majority of talking, conveying directly to students the rules or content that she found important. Her formal lectures therefore included "a lot of straightforward informing and instructing" (Mercer, 1995, p. 10) as well as questions to which she already knew the answers and expected students to know.

Student-led discussions

Discussion topics (e.g., clothes and culture, euthanasia, gender roles) were designed to lead to greater cultural understanding. Student-run discussions followed one basic format. The teacher assigned one student the role of the discussion leader. Each student became a discussion leader only once. The responsibility of the discussion leaders was to start a discussion on their own topic, keep it going, and bring it to a conclusion by using the participation norms and language that they had learned in class. The discussion

leaders used three prompts around which the class discussion centered. Here are two examples from two different discussions conducted in the semester:

Example 1:

1. What types of clothes and colors for clothing are now popular in your country?
2. Do you think that fashion and status are connected? Explain.
3. Agree? Disagree? Why?: Fashion represents a country's culture.

Example 2:

1. Do you think that time travel could be possible some day? Explain why or why not.
2. If you could take a trip forward or backward in time, what period would you want to visit, what would you want to do there and how long would you want to stay? Why?
3. How do people "travel in time" today? Give examples.

Students came to the class prepared to share their ideas. They were given a handout for preparation and also a sample discussion script to guide them which can be found in Appendix. Before each discussion, students were also expected to interview a native speaker by asking those three questions. The role of the discussion leader was to elicit participation while at the same time direct the class members in sharing their opinions and those of the native speakers who were interviewed.

Individual Student Presentations

For the first group of presentations, students were expected to narrate a story from their life experiences. Story presentations took place only once, at the beginning of the semester, and were videotaped by the teacher. Each student was required to tell an unforgettable story of his or her own, supported by a visual representation of the

narration to engage the listeners and practice presentation skills. Students used overhead projectors to show their pictures while narrating their stories. A narration of 3-6 minutes was always followed by a question-and-answer period of about 2-4 minutes. Each presenter used note-cards that included outline/script combinations. The second group of presentations was on self-selected topics (e.g., healthy diet, Japanese anime, etc.) and ran through the end of the semester. These presentations followed the same format as that of story presentations.

Listening and note-taking tasks

Students listened to audiotaped lectures in or outside of the class. They were expected to take notes to remember the main ideas and details of the lectures. In class, they had to turn in their notes to the teacher and take a quiz (without the notes). In-class listening and note-taking tasks usually took 30-40 minutes. These tasks were conducted to prepare students for the TOEFL.

Participants

There were twelve students from nine nationalities in the oral skills class. Nine students fully agreed to participate in this study. However, one of these participants, Mindy, rarely came to class. One additional student, Takumi, agreed that his statements from class could be used in the analysis, but declined to keep diaries or be interviewed. Two students who declined to be in the study accepted my presence in class and allowed me to audio- and videotape classroom events, but their utterances were not used in any way. When these students conducted classroom presentations or led whole-class discussions, I turned off my recording devices. However, early in April, one of these

students (JJ) expressed a desire to participate in the study. Although it was too late, I still included this person's classroom talk in the last month in my ongoing analysis.

Only three of the participants had completed their bachelor's degree in their home countries while the others had a high school diploma. Only Viresh, an Indian student, was studying at the graduate level at the time of this study. Before coming to the U.S., all the students except Rolanda had studied English as part of their formal education in their home countries. Rolanda did not know any English when she came to the U.S., as the only foreign language she had studied in high school was French. All student participants, except Gui Min, stated that their reason for coming to the United States was to pursue a degree. Gui Min's primary reason, on the other hand, was only to learn English. It was their first time in the U.S. for all participants. Further information about the participants is presented in Table 1. What follows is a detailed description of participants.

The classroom teacher: Betsy

The participant teacher, Betsy, was born and raised in a small town in the southern United States "with one foot on the farm" (First interview: February 2, 2010). Her parents held college degrees. Since her father was a high school principal, Betsy grew up seeing schools from the inside. Not only her father in the family, but also her aunt and uncle were teachers. Having teachers in the family had had a huge impact on her. When Betsy attended college, as part of the foreign language requirement she studied French, which she really liked. Her Vietnamese French teacher encouraged her to major in French. Yet, her father discouraged her, saying there were not many jobs for a French

teacher. Thus, Betsy majored in Math. After getting her degree, she taught French and Math for two years in a high school. Then she went back to college, where she registered for several Bilingual Education and Applied Linguistics courses. It was during this time when she started to teach English in an Intensive English program of a university. On the first day of her teaching, she decided to get her MA degree in TEFL.

After getting her MA degree, Betsy moved to Mexico and continued to teach English as a foreign language for three years. She then lived in New York about six years and taught ESL at a community college. Betsy had been teaching ESL for more than 30 years at the time of the study. In her teaching career, she has had diverse student groups including adults, children, and adolescents, which enabled her to study and use different teaching methodologies. Her extensive experience in teaching enabled her to feel confident in her ability to teach diverse student groups. She said those years helped her learn how to think on her feet. Besides her teaching responsibilities, Betsy did coordination and administration in various institutions she worked for. Additionally, she was an active scholar who was involved in professional organizations, attended and presented at academic conferences, and even wrote an ESL writing text-book.

In the IEP program, she was the most experienced teacher. She was well-respected by her colleagues and students. Betsy always came about 20 minutes early to her oral skills class to prepare for the class and remained after class to answer students' questions or to meet students one-on-one. In every class session, she started by asking each student how s/he was.

Pseudonyms	Viresh	Fareed	Takumi	Gui Min	Ahmad	Rolanda	Chen	Hashim	Martina
Age	22	20	23	22	19	21	22	25	18
Gender	Male	Male	Male	Female	Male	Female	Female	Male	Female
Region of Origin	South Asia	Western Asia	East Asia	East Asia	Central Africa	Middle Africa	East Asia	North Africa	South America
Highest Level of Education	B.S. in Computer Science	High School	B.A. in Law	High School	High School	High School	B.A. in French	B.Sc. in Civil Engineering	High School
Mother tongue	Telugu	Arabic	Japanese	Chinese	French	Spanish	Mandarin	Arabic	Spanish
Other languages studied	Hindi, Tamil	-	Chinese	-	Arabic, German	French, Fang	French	Italian, French (informal education)	Portuguese
Date of arrival in the US	01/10	03/09	01/10	07/09	01/10	03/09	07/09	01/10	01/10
Previous work experience	None	None	Yes	Yes	None	None	None	Yes	None

Table 1: Demographic information about participants

Greeting each student was important for Betsy as she said that she aimed to show her students that she wanted to acknowledge each of them as a human being. With regard to her lesson planning, Betsy was consistently well-prepared for teaching and for her students. Activities were planned in advance with careful thought as to the appropriate amount of time and materials needed, which resulted in an efficient use of classroom time. Handouts were usually e-mailed in order to save instructional time in class. She usually wrote a very detailed outline of each session on the chalk board before classes started.

Highly experienced working with second language learners, Betsy spoke in a slow, deliberate manner while communicating with her students. During her lectures, she aimed to engage learners by asking questions and providing feedback on their answers. Her questions always prompted the learners to provide specific, prescribed information. She frequently checked their understanding by asking if they understood. Students usually responded with a nod or a 'yes', except a few students who took the opportunity to make comments.

In describing her oral skills class, Betsy said, "I always feel like a circus performer who is trying to keep all those plates spinning, so oops I am spinning the pronunciation plate, ah, presentation, speaking, anyway!" In addition to intensive classroom instruction, I observed that Betsy spent a great amount of time outside of the class working with students and providing feedback on their progress. For example, after each individual student presentation, Betsy met with each student, watched the video

recordings of the presentations with them, and discussed areas of weaknesses and strengths offering suggestions and strategies for improvement.

Focal Participant I: Hashim

Hashim, the oldest student in the oral skills class, was born in and grew up in North Africa and spoke Arabic as his native language. His parents had no formal education and came from the working class. Hashim was born in a village, and he was the youngest of seven children in the family. Village life came with a number of societal norms impacting Hashim's life. In the second interview, Hashim said:

Hashim: Very limited culture I mean very restricted culture, very restricted family. Like when I was child, I was not allowed to play with other guys or to be out late, stuff like that, or to eat this, even to dress this.

Researcher: Why?

Hashim: Related to our culture because we used to live in the old village, so we are very conservative family, we used to.

Describing his childhood and family, Hashim emphasized that his life was restricted around the norms in that particular village. However, later on, his parents decided to move to a city in order to provide a good quality of education for their children. All of his siblings, including Hashim, were able to attend college.

Hashim received his undergraduate degree in his home country. His major was civil engineering. Starting from the sixth grade, English was mandatory every year. Hashim also took classes at the British Council in his home country during one summer when he learned British English. In his school, Hashim said some of the professors were foreign so they had to communicate in English. Many engineering textbooks were also in English. Knowing English was therefore important to succeed in college. After

graduation, he worked as a construction project manager in several places including the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Saudi Arabia, Italy, and Switzerland. His stay in Europe gave him the opportunity to become familiar with other languages, particularly Italian. Before coming to the United States, Hashim lived in the United Kingdom, where he rented one room owned by an old British woman with whom Hashim lived for three or four months. One of Hashim's brothers was also working on a degree in Medicine at that time in England, and he later became a college professor. He said his work experience enabled him to learn and speak some French and Italian. Hashim's work and study abroad experience in various countries provided him with cultural and symbolic capital that most of the other students in the oral skills class did not possess.

On the first day of class, Hashim had been in Texas for ten days and it was his first visit to the United States. After completing his language studies, his aim was to do his masters in construction project management. He stated that his three main purposes to come to the United States were to get a master's degree, learn English, and improve his life. His ultimate goal was to become a college professor. Hashim knew that he had to improve his English in order to succeed in college and work life.

When the students introduced themselves on the first week of school, Hashim said he loved to help people and interact with them and enjoyed working as a guide in historical and touristic places. He liked to play table tennis and volleyball, but unlike his Arab friends in the Intensive English Program, he did not like to play soccer, which somehow disconnected him from those men whose major extra-curricular activity was playing soccer.

At the beginning of the semester, when Hashim was asked to self-evaluate his English language skills, particularly speaking, he stated he thought he spoke English much better when he compared himself to other international students he knew who were learning English, and better when he compared himself to his classmates in the oral skills class. Hashim also felt comfortable speaking English with the ESL faculty and staff as he said they knew his background, so they would be able to understand him even if he did not speak English well.

Although I did not get a chance to observe Hashim outside of the school, I tried to learn about his experiences in this foreign land from his diaries and the interviews with him. Like other students in the oral skills class, Hashim also struggled in locating himself in the new cultural setting. He did not have any friends or family members in the United States. Hashim was living with two American roommates whom he found online. He stated that his roommates were good and kind. Yet, he did not feel very close to them for a number of reasons. First, roommates were always busy with their classes. Second, they preferred spending tome together. And third, Hashim believed cultural and religious differences caused barriers between them.

Focal Participant II: Ahmad

Ahmad was living with his uncle and his uncle's family. He spoke both French and English at home – English with his cousins who were born in the United States. His interaction with his cousins seemed to have a positive impact on his English as he sometimes used vocabulary that other students did not know in the oral skills class. Ahmad was from a bilingual country where his mother was a homemaker while his father

did administrative work. His mother had a special place in Ahmad's life as she was very supportive of Ahmad's education and taught him several subjects, including English, even before Ahmad started school.

Ahmad was one of the students who was eager to use his English especially with native speakers. He tried to chat with native speakers he met on the bus on his way to home or school, as suggested by his ESL teachers, but those were not always positive experiences. He lived in a neighborhood with a large Hispanic population, which also did not give him enough opportunities to use his English. Among the participants in this study, it was Ahmad who strongly and completely positioned himself as an outsider in this new culture. His reflexive positioning was based on three incidents he shared with me in his diary:

Ahmad: This afternoon, something very embarrassing happened to me. I took the bus and I was sitting next to an American girl (she was pretty). I tried to start a conversation with, not for dating her, it was not my purpose! I was trying to apply my teacher's advices, which was to have as many conversations as possible with as many native speakers as possible. She must have misunderstood my intentions. She might be thinking that I was trying to woo her. That's terrible! The more I was talking, the more she was losing interest; interest is too much said: there was no interest!

> This is not the first time that I've dealt with such a situation. The last time that it happened, it was with a man, and he told me that he doesn't talk with strangers!!! Another day, I met a guy that was reading his Physics book. I introduced myself, saying that I studies physics when I was in high school. He looked nice! At least that what I thought. We take the email of each other. I've sent him many emails and he's still have not replied any of them! That's another story.
>
> About that girl in the bus, I told her that I didn't mean to embarrass her and I apologized for disturbing. After that I tried to find another seat.
>
> People are very hypocrite here. When you look at them, they are always smiling at you. Sometimes you may think that they are very nice and that smile means they're very attentive. No way! I'm sure that what comes in their head when they

> smile: "Look at that, he looks like a mole" and other insults that I censure. That's very sad from a country which people are said to be welcoming. But I don't care, it exists many ways by which I can improve my skills in English, and I certainly don't need these hypocrites. I have my school materials that surround me, and my teachers at the (*Name of the Intensive English program*) that are very attentive, helpful, careful to me (From Ahmad's diary: 02/2010).

Ahmad took it for granted that Americans had little desire to speak with foreigners. Since the people whom Ahmad described in his diary did not seem to be interested in carrying on a conversation with him, Ahmad himself did not have the wish to speak with native speakers anymore. Consequently, he did not feel positive about domestic people and his relationships with them and gave up on pursuing opportunities outside of the ESL program to speak English. He instead decided to use the materials and his teachers. Perhaps Ahmad was the student-participant whose negotiation of membership outside of the class was the toughest. He constantly appeared to negotiate his membership and identity in this new culture. He was not only establishing an ESL learner identity but also negotiating his racial identity:

Ahmad: I've noticed (since my arrival here) that black people (African Americans) are very sociable with each other in this country. I don't know if it's only an assumption, but I'll try to substantiate it. Every time that I met a black man, he's kind of polite with me. Even friendly! Do they really mean it? I can't talk. But that's a good impression that I had from black people here. But they are so sticky. Sometimes it's embarrassing! They overdo it and I hate excess. It doesn't mean that because we are same skin – colored that we belong together! If friendship was just based on the skin's color pattern, I think it would a disaster in humans relationships.

Being one of the two black students in the oral skills class, Ahmad discussed how others treated him and how these experiences affected him. While other students negotiated their ESL learner identity, Ahmad also had to negotiate his black identity in this new culture.

Martina

Martina was born in and grew up in South America and spoke Spanish as her native language. Before coming to the United States, Martina studied English through formal education during primary and elementary school. At the age of seven, she attended a bilingual school where they had English as the medium of instruction in the morning, and Spanish in the afternoon. She spent six years in that school before transferring to another school where they had English only once a week. She perceived that her English got worse at that school.

Before coming to the United States, Martina had hired a tutor who taught her English three days per week for about five months. Martina did not have any friends or family members in the US. This was her first 'study abroad' experience. She had one female roommate. Martina came to the United States because she was a tennis player and was awarded a scholarship to play tennis in the United States and have language education. A few other students on the tennis team were also taking language classes in the IEP. Time spent together inside and outside of the program led to strong friendships among these tennis players. Martina seemed to have multiple opportunities to practice her English outside because other students on her tennis team as did not speak Spanish. Her situation was therefore slightly different than other students in the oral skills class, because she had more social opportunities; she made friends with other women on the tennis team and frequently met them for social gatherings. Whereas other student-participants had to create their own opportunities to practice English, Martina already had those opportunities provided as an active member of a sports team.

In the oral skills class, Martina mostly interacted with Fareed and did not interact much with other students. She always wanted to sit by Fareed. Although Martina did not talk much at first as she said she did not feel confident enough in using English in the oral skills class, she developed confidence over time. Because of her tennis practice sessions, she either came late to the class or left 15-20 minutes early.

Gui Min

Gui Min was from East Asia. Like most of the other student participants, she started to learn English when she attended elementary school. At the time of this study, Gui Min had completed one year in the IEP. She was the only child in her family and came from a wealthy family. Although Gui Min was not a shy student, she kept quiet most of the time in the oral skills class and answered questions when called on by the teacher. Before taking the oral skills class, she had taken a writing course from Betsy. In the oral skills, Betsy positioned Gui Min as an "impressive student" (Final Interview with Betsy: May 7, 2010) who had made lots of progress since attending the program.

Chen

On the first day of class, Chen had been here for 7 months. She graduated from college the year before in Taiwan where she earned a BA degree in French. Her goal was to get an MBA in the United States.

At the time she was taking classes in the Intensive English program, she was living in a small town with her aunt and younger sister. They spoke Mandarin at home. Chen's sister was a high school student. Chen had responsibilities towards her sister who felt depressed at the beginning when she started school in the United States. Her limited

vocabulary and low proficiency level made it difficult for her to understand school subjects, but with Chen's help and encouragement, her sister got used to the system and became a good student.

Chen always came to the oral skills class prepared. Although Chen did not volunteer much to speak in the classroom, she was considered a strong student by Betsy who said "she has a wide vocabulary. She can get across her meaning even though there is a lot of grammar errors in there" (Final interview: May 7, 2010). She became good friends with Gui Min and JJ in a short amount of time in the semester.

Rolanda

Rolanda was from Middle Africa and spoke Spanish as her first language. She also studied French in high school and was fluent in French, a language spoken in the place where she was born and grew up. She was black. She had spent 10 months in the U.S. and it was her third semester in the Intensive English program when I started to collect my data. Rolanda said she came to the United States to learn English and receive a college degree in civil engineering. She had one cousin who was living in the US who helped her to come to the U.S. to study. She lived in a Residence Hall for one semester, then moved into an apartment that she shared with a roommate who was also an ESL learner in the Intensive English program. Rolanda's roommate was Hispanic, and they spoke Spanish at home. When compared to other students in the Oral Skills class, Rolanda, although very active and self-confident, had issues with vocabulary and could not always make herself understood with ease when she was searching for the words that she needed to use. Rolanda seemed to be friends with everyone in the oral skills class.

Her extroverted personality enabled her to join every conversation easily. Oral skills was not her first course with Betsy. She had taken a writing course from her before.

Viresh

Viresh, a 22-year-old, came to the United States soon after graduating from university and was pursuing his master's degree in computer science. Viresh had been in the United States for 2 weeks when I started to observe the oral skills class. It was his second time in the US. He had been conditionally accepted to the graduate school and had to pass the TOEFL. He was living with his childhood friend in an apartment. Viresh was perhaps the most fluent student in the oral skills class, but his strong Indian accent led to frequent communication breakdowns in class, and he had to repeat himself often. This was the main reason for his relative silence in the oral skills class, as he himself acknowledged. His main goal was to pass the TOEFL, and he did not seem to be interested in the social dynamics of the classroom.

Fareed

Fareed had been in the United States for seven months at the time of this research. It was his first visit to the US. He was living in a dorm and his roommate was from Japan. He aimed to study accounting in graduate school. He was well known as a good soccer player and popular with his teachers and classmates because he was open and social.

Recruiting Participants and Maintaining Ethical Standards

I met Betsy, the teacher participant, at a conference. We talked about our teaching and research interests, and she seemed to be very interested in my possible dissertation

research topic. A year after this accidental meeting, I began to work in the same Intensive English Program (IEP) with Betsy so that we came to know each other better. It was around this time when I verbally invited Betsy to participate in my study because she was a very experienced teacher and enthusiastic about my project.

The first day of class was January 20. Because the teacher of another oral skills class could not come to school due to an illness, her students were also placed in Betsy's class. Because of unique circumstances and the insufficiency of the classroom space, I could not attend Betsy's class on the first day. Instead, I started my observations on the 25th of January when the class included 10 students. The following week, one student was transferred to a lower level class and on the 8th of February, Ahmad and Martina were transferred to Betsy's class from a lower level. During the initial weeks of the semesters, such changes were usually made upon the advice or request of classroom teachers who thought students were misplaced.

When I entered the class for the first time, I sat on a chair assigned by Betsy who put a note on the chair that said, "Reserved, please do not sit." I always sat in that chair throughout the semester and either Betsy or I placed the note during the first month. Later on, all students knew that it was my seat, and nobody took it.

When I joined the class for the first time, Betsy introduced me to students saying I was a teacher in the program and also a doctoral student who was doing research. Betsy told them that I was going to observe them and taught them the expression "guinea pigs." She then invited me to talk about my research. After I briefly introduced myself, I talked about why I wanted to observe them. Instead of talking about my research in detail, I only

told them that I was interested in the impact of broad issues, such as gender or culture, on ESL learning. This way, students knew why I was there, but I did not invite them to my study yet.

During the first two weeks, I took my recording devices to the class but not the video-camera. My purpose was to help students get used to my presence first. At the end of the second week, Betsy told them that I would give further information about my study. I talked about my research during a 25-minute portion of the regular class schedule. This time, I introduced the study to the students, informed them about their role in it, and invited them orally to participate. I distributed written consent forms in English and gave them time to read the forms and ask questions. I emphasized several times that their participation was voluntary and that they might withdraw at any time with no punishment or negative consequences. Betsy was not present during the consent process in the classroom. If students agreed to participate, they signed both copies of the consent form and returned one to me by placing it in an envelope that I had provided. The students who volunteered to participate were also asked to e-mail me to determine a time and place for initial interviews. If students did not want to participate, they put an X at the top of the consent form and again returned it to me in an envelope provided. They were not questioned if they did not want to participate. Among the twelve students who were invited to participate in the study, nine students agreed to participate and stayed in the study until its completion. It was almost at the end of the semester when one of the non-participating students indicated his interest and stated he wanted to be in the study. I

did not interview him but had his written permission to include his talk whenever I needed.

During the first three weeks of the semester, I familiarized myself with the setting, trying to position myself as a researcher, and exploring the range and nature of classroom events. Starting from the second week of February, my focus changed from more general observations of the classroom to the interactions of particular students. This selection was inductive, purposeful, and necessitated. The participation and positioning of those particular students differed in significant ways from those of other students in class, which made the selection inductive and purposeful. Additionally, I judged that focusing on these two students would make a better case study design and a cross-case analysis would be easier. This selection did not mean that I stopped collecting data from other student participants. I continued to closely observe everyone, but I observed these two participants more closely by placing audio-recordings on their desks and trying to videotape them whenever possible.

Data Collection

This was a 3.5-month qualitative study of classroom interactions in a high intermediate-low advanced oral skills ESL class in an academic intensive English program. The data sources for this project included teacher-student interviews, extensive observations, field notes, audio and video tapes of classroom events, diaries, collection of artifacts (e.g., teacher notes, handouts) and an open ended questionnaire. I collected various sources of data to understand the multiple and complex aspects of participants' classroom interaction and positional identities.

The classroom talk obtained through audio and video recordings and my field notes of extensive classroom observations are the major sources of data. Other data sources were used to supplement the primary form of data. In this section, I describe my data collection procedures starting from the primary form of data, followed by the supplementary form. A summary of data sources is presented in Table 2.

Primary Data Sources

Classroom Observations and Field Notes

I observed classroom events to understand how students used English to participate in class discussions and activities and how positions developed. The class was observed for 15 weeks with five hours a week of instruction. Each class session was audio- and video-recorded and all the observations were labeled according to the month and day observed. I stored the data digitally on my laptop, DVDs, and flash drives.

I started to audiotape the class on the first day I joined them. The tiny classroom was packed with students so that it was hard to move around. Upon the teacher's request, I sat in a chair always in the same corner of the room and used my laptop to take field notes. This position made it possible for me to observe everyone in class. I tried to move as much as I needed to closely observe my focal participants when they moved around to form pairs or groups. I placed one tape recorder on the teacher's desk and two other ones in different spots during the semester. Starting from the second week of February, I began to video-tape the class.

Methods	Data Collection Period	Data
Classroom observations	• Ongoing	Field notes on 27 lessons (67.5 hours of observation)
First interviews with student participants (Hashim, Ahmad, Gui Min, Chen, Fareed, Viresh, Rolanda, and Martina)	• February 2010	Audio-taped and transcribed interviews 8 interviews in total Average 1:05 hours each
Second interviews with student participants (Hashim, Ahmad, Gui Min, Chen, Rolanda, and Martina)	• April 2010	Audio-taped and transcribed interviews 6 interviews in total Average 1:25 hours each
First and second interviews with the teacher	• February 2010 • May 2010	Audio-taped and transcribed interviews 2 interviews in total First interview 1:50 hours Second interview 2:20 hours
Student Diaries (by Hashim, Ahmad, Gui Min, Chen, Rolanda, Martina, Fareed, Viresh)	• Ongoing	Written journals
Questionnaires	• January 2010	Answers provided for closed- and open-ended questions Essay
Documents	• Ongoing	Course syllabus Handouts for classroom activities Student evaluations of presentations Guidelines/rubrics for presentations and student-led discussions Copies of student work

Table 2: Summary of Data Sources

The participant teacher initially did not allow me to videotape. She was afraid that students would not want to speak in front of the camera. She further said that she herself did not feel comfortable with it. After a long and persistent negotiation, she finally accepted the request and allowed me to use my camera. Yet, she checked with students several times if my videotaping disturbed them or not. In the initial weeks, I placed the camera on my desk and usually used the hand-manual to control it. Upon reading the piece by Erickson (2006) that discusses videotaping in classrooms, I decided to set up the camera to one side of the class. There were times when I was not satisfied with its new position because the camera did not capture all of the students and teacher's movement. Therefore, I continued to control it manually and also purchased extra lenses to widen the scope. Still, due to the very narrow rectangular shape of the classroom, it was not possible to capture everyone on the film, but I was able to record everyone's voice.

In addition to audio- and video-recordings, I took notes during the observations and restricted my notes to reference only those students who agreed to be study participants. My goal was to expand my field notes after returning home from the field. Although I was able to accomplish this goal some days, there were also times I could not expand the field notes on the same days I conducted observations. On those days, I focused on student diaries. In expanding my notes, I preferred to transcribe parts of the classroom discourse directly some days, but at other times, I expanded my notes by adding theoretical and methodological notes (Hubbard & Power, 1999). Those theoretical and methodological notes enabled me to refresh my memory, see the details that I might have missed, and prepare myself better for the next observations. During data collection,

I also kept and used notes from the articles I read, which helped me produce more speculations, interpretations, questions, and ideas about my data.

During the observations, I particularly looked for negotiation of meaning, repair, avoidance, code-switching, turn-taking in order to gain a broad understanding of classroom events and participation in this particular setting. The following questions that I adapted from Young (2009) further guided me in my observations:

- What can be concluded about speaker transition in this classroom?
- How can one describe the participation framework in this class?
- What are the features of grammar that participants frequently employ?
- How does turn-taking happen?
    - Who selects the next speaker?
    - How do participants know how to begin a conversation and when to end it?
    - Does turn-taking differ in different practices in class?
- Who repairs errors? What are the ways in which participants respond to interactional problems?

Supplementary Data Sources

Questionnaire

I gave a detailed questionnaire to student participants at the beginning of the semester in order to get further information about their language learning experiences, language contacts, and perceptions of the relationship between language and culture. The questionnaire was adapted from Pierce's dissertation research (1993) with her

permission. Two scenarios in which language learners were positioned either with power or without power in their experiences with others were also added. Students were asked what they would do or how they would feel under such circumstances described in the scenarios. These scenarios were instances or brief stories of language learners that the students read about and then responded to how they might feel in similar situation. The final part of the questionnaire included an essay-type question which was similar to that of Pierce: "Some people believe that the US is a country that welcomes and supports international students, immigrants, and other foreign visitors. Others believe the U.S. is mistrustful, unwelcoming, and often impatient with foreigners in the county. What do you think? Give examples from your own experiences as a foreign student in the U.S." My purpose in asking this question was to gain insight into the experiences these students had as foreign students and their perceptions of themselves in a foreign country.

Interviews

Interviews with the teacher and student participants were conducted at the beginning and end of the academic semester and enabled me to better understand positioning and its relation to language learning. All the interviews were audio-taped and transcribed. Since most of the student participants were full-time in the program, they were taking all skill-based courses (e.g., reading, writing). In addition to their course-work, most of them chose to join intensive TEOFL preparation sessions on Friday and paid extra for it. Students were also expected to complete extensive homework assignments. Therefore, they had very limited free time, which made it a challenge to schedule interviews with them.

Initial Interviews with student participants: In early February 2010, I interviewed eight student participants (Hashim, Ahmad, Martina, Rolanda, Viresh, Gui Min, Fareed, and Chen) individually. All these semi-structured interviews were conducted in English at the IEP building. I reserved classrooms to conduct these interviews and they took place either during lunch hours or at a time prior to or following classes. The main goals for the first set of interviews with student participants were to (1) learn about students' educational and professional backgrounds, (2) gain information about their reasons for studying English and coming to the United States, (3) find out their initial impressions and experiences in the new cultural setting. Morita's dissertation research (2002) gave me ideas to form my open-ended questions for the initial interviews. Additionally, I asked students to clarify unclear points or uncertainties which emerged from the answers they gave on an open-ended questionnaire which I gave them on the first day I visited the classroom. I then invited them to write diaries as part of this research project. Initial interviews prepared me for the final interviews. Based on the participants' answers, I formulated new questions for the final interviews. Therefore, these initial interviews were more general, flexible, exploratory, and more like a conversation (Merriam, 2009).

Final interviews with student participants: Final interviews with student participants were conducted starting mid-April 2010 and ending just before classes ended in May. The aim of these interviews was to understand how their experiences, positions, and their perceptions of themselves as language learners changed over the semester. I asked them questions to determine what factors affected their participation or non-participation in class, what helped them the most to improve their English in and outside

of the classroom, and under what conditions they felt comfortable or uncomfortable in using English. I further asked them to reflect on and discuss their interactions with their teacher and classmates in oral skills class. Martina, Hashim, and Ahmad also watched some clips from video-recordings with me during their interviews. I asked them to reflect on these with the aim of finding their perspectives and thoughts as well as beliefs, experiences, or contexts that might have influenced those certain acts and actions in those particular interactions.

During this final set of interviews, I also wanted students to tell me their life-stories for a number of reasons. Life stories, I thought, would enable me to provide detailed background information about my participants. Moreover, self-stories of language learners would provide ways of understanding the relationship between language learner, social context, and language learning and use (Young, 2009). This way, I hoped to understand how students saw themselves as members of certain groups and as learners of a new language.

Interviews with the teacher: The initial interview with the teacher was more general and conducted to get to know her teaching background and to understand her philosophy and her perceptions of her students particularly in this class. The final interview was more specific and was aimed at understanding how she positioned her learners in the ways that I observed, her perspectives on students' participation, how she worked to facilitate students' language learning, and the difficulties she had when teaching this oral skills class. I also had several informal conversations with her and some

of those conversations were also audiotaped. All of the interviews with the teacher were conducted in the classrooms I reserved after classes were finished.

Diaries

During the initial interviews with the student participants, I explained the purpose of diaries orally and provided a letter to make things clearer (see Appendix). I particularly wanted them to write about when and under what conditions they used English. I also asked them to reflect on their experiences in the IEP and their interactions with Betsy and classmates in oral skills as well as native speakers with whom they interacted outside of the IEP.

The main goal of the diaries for me was to understand their language learning experiences, their interpretations connected with these experiences, and if or how these experiences and interpretations changed over time. Students were given two options for diaries. They could either write or speak/record their experiences and ideas at least three times during a month. Every month, they would e-mail me their written notes or provide a hard copy for me. They could send me an audio-file if they chose to record themselves. However, no one chose the voice-recording option. I therefore provided each student with a notebook and several pens. Only Hashim wanted to type his diary entries, but there were times when he switched to handwriting. I sent them reminders via e-mail a week before due dates. I returned the diaries to them on the following class day with my feedback on their grammar and vocabulary use as we had agreed at the beginning.

I gave flexibility to students in terms of the use of English or the content that they might include. I also gave them a set of prompts to help them write/talk. Those were

statements like “How did your language learning experiences go this week?”, “Do you feel that you participated more in your classes this week? Why?”, or “Did you have a chance to spend some time with native speakers this week?”

Although Martina, Rolanda, Chen, and Gui Min regularly kept diaries, they did not tell me much about their interactions and experiences in oral skills class. They usually narrated the events of their days, but did not reflect much on their experiences. I received the richest diary data, in terms of content, relevance, and quantity, from Ahmad. Although Hashim provided great details for me to focus on in his entries, he did not keep a diary regularly no matter how much I tried to encourage him. The entries written by Viresh and Fareed were extremely thin and they did not continue to keep diaries after a few entries. Despite being insufficient, diary data were helpful in terms of seeing students’ other positions and roles in addition to their ‘student positions’ so that I was able to get a holistic view of their language learning experiences in the new cultural setting.

Documents

The documents collected during the academic semester included the course syllabus, handouts, guidelines/rubrics for presentations and class discussions, prompts for homework assignments, copies of students’ evaluations of individual student presentations, and copies of visual picture stories that students drew and used for their life-story presentations. Usually, the teacher provided me with copies.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was ongoing and inductive. I used constant comparative method (Merriam, 2009), Positioning Theory (e.g., Davies & Harré, 1990, 1999), and techniques of discourse analysis (Wood & Kroger, 2000) to analyze and interpret my data. My data analysis can be described in three phases.

Phase I: Preliminary data analysis

Preliminary data analysis occurred during data collection. I reviewed my field notes weekly and noted related story lines to transcribe later. Through these reviews, I developed a sense of what both typical and atypical segments of classroom talk were and transcribed atypical story lines. In this study, a story line refers to a context of acts and positions that are developed around a certain topic. What I mean by a typical segment is the IRF sequence (Initiation-response-feedback), a common interactional pattern in classroom discourse (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). In this traditional teacher-student exchange, the classroom teacher usually *initiates* the conversation asking a question, a *response* by student(s) is provided, and the teacher gives some *feedback* to that response (or evaluation).

An example of this pattern is as follows:

1. Teacher: And what do we use this to talk about or measure?
2. Student: To determine the acidity of substance.
3. Teacher: The acidity of the substance. That's right, so which direction is
4. more acid?

As seen in the example, which was taken from the classroom I observed for this study, the teacher asks a question. The student provides a response, which is repeated and

accepted by the teacher. Finally, the feedback, "that's right", is provided by the teacher. Cazden describes lessons consisting of these segments as traditional. In my ongoing analysis, I particularly looked for segments that did not follow the IRF sequence. For example, if a story line included an unexpected move in classroom conversation such as code-switching, interruption, overlapping talk, unanticipated turn, or avoidance, I defined it as atypical and transcribed that story line to examine it more closely. In analyzing those transcripts, my goal was to identify actions or interactions that led to or resulted from positioning. I paid attention to what was said, how it was responded to, and what was accomplished as a result of a particular interaction (Rex & Schiller, 2009). This initial stage of data analysis included multiple reviews of data. At this point, I decided to focus on two focal participants, Ahmad and Hashim, as their participation and positionings differed from other students in the class.

While transcribing my data, I was aware that it was impossible to capture every single feature of the talk. However, I did my best to provide a verbatim transcription because the details were important for accurate interpretations. I used a phonological approach, which "modifies the standard orthography by presenting words and other signs through a combination of words, quasi-words, and other symbols" (Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. 83). However, I did not use a large variety of symbols for readability purposes. I also did not correct language-related errors that the student-participants made. Table 3 presents the transcription conventions used throughout the study.

[	The onset of overlapping talk
(0.2)	Pauses in seconds (e.g., two seconds of pause)
:	Lengthening of the previous sound or syllable
( )	Transcriber's comment as well as contextual or explanatory information
°	Quiet or whispered talk
X	Deleted information because of confidentiality
xxx	Deleted swear words
…	Talk omitted from the data segment

Table 3: Transcription Conventions

Phase II: Constant Comparison and Cross-Case Analysis

In order to organize the transcripts of my story lines, I decided to form four groups: (a) Hashim, (b) Ahmad, (c) Hashim and Ahmad, (d) Other (positionings that excluded Hashim and Ahmad). For example, if a story line included Hashim and Betsy, I placed it into the sheet protector whose label was (a) Hashim. If it was a story line between Hashim and Ahmad, it was placed in another sheet protector whose label was (c) Hashim and Ahmad. Each transcribed story line was printed out and placed into one of the four sheet protectors to be further analyzed. In the meantime, raw data and initial analysis/hypotheses were informally shared and discussed with the classroom teacher for the purposes of triangulation and member checking.

This second phase of data analysis included constant comparison (Merriam, 2009). Each story line was coded and within each story line positions were identified. When I completed identifying positions in each story line, I grouped story lines that included similar positions. These story lines were then compared to each other to see if emerging hypotheses appeared constantly across different story lines. For instance, if Hashim positioned himself as an expert in one story line, would it be possible to find the same or similar positioning in another story line in which he was involved? If so, what could be a possible hypothesis about Hashim's interactions with his classmates in student-led discussions? The two single case studies were constantly compared to each other, which enabled me to add thickness to my descriptions and richness to my interpretations of my data. Careful and constant review of those cases enabled me to draw a single set of "cross-case" conclusions (Yin, 2009). Finally, several themes were developed to describe Hashim and Ahmad's positioning and classroom participation.

Phase III: Negative cases and use of supplementary data sources

In the last phase of data analysis, I used student diaries, interview transcripts, and video-recordings to interpret my findings. It was also during this stage that I looked for negative cases and non-confirming evidence so that I could refine my working hypothesis (negative case analysis). I also coded supplementary data, and used emerging themes to make better sense of classroom transcripts. Comparisons were also made in this phase both within and between data sources. Recursive review and analysis of supplementary data sources helped me review my findings about two focal participants by confirming or revising them (within case analysis).

Data Trustworthiness

This study documents the focal students' shifting positional identities, changing perspectives, and feelings in "actual talk" over an extended period of time, addressing the tight and complex relationships of these to second language learning. I triangulated my data through use of multiple data-collection methods (e.g., interviews, observations, etc.) and multiple sources (e.g., students, teacher).

Additionally, I have used several important procedures to augment the trustworthiness of my research. One of them was my "prolonged engagement and persistent observation" in the field (Glesne, 2006, p. 37). By spending extended time in the oral skills class, I was able to develop trust with the participants, learn the classroom culture, and check out my hunches (Glesne, 2006). Persistent observations further allowed my participants to get used to my presence, which might have increased their comfort with me.

During this engagement, I shared interview transcripts with the participants and asked them to clarify vague or ambiguous points. In order to represent their ideas accurately, I also wrote follow-up questions in their diaries. I had a number of informal conversations with the participant teacher either before or after her class hours. I either took notes of these conversations or audio-recorded them with her permission.

My dissertation chair guided me whenever I had questions related to data collection and analysis. Several of my dissertation committee members also examined with me different phases of my research process and product through "auditing" my field notes or analytic coding scheme (Glesne, 2006). During data collection, I was taking an

advanced level discourse analysis course offered by one of my dissertation committee members. In this class, I had multiple opportunities to look at my data with several peers and my professor, which allowed for an "external audit" (Glesne, 2006, p. 38) of some of my data. There were also times when I watched some portions of video-recordings with my professor who gave me ideas about analysis and interpretation. Besides my peers and professors, I also discussed my data a number of times with the director of the Intensive English program where I conducted my research. At the time of my data collection, the director had recently completed her PhD. All the external reflections and input on my work were particularly helpful. In addition to "peer review and debriefing" (Glesne, 2006, p. 37), I always searched for negative cases and unconfirming evidence so that I could refine my working hypotheses (Glesne, 2006). I always reflected upon my own subjectivity, my roles during data collection, and how I would use and monitor all these in my research (Glesne, 2006).

Wood and Kroger (2000) suggest that discourse analysis rejects the possibility of producing one true interpretation of the discourse as well as replicability and accuracy as criteria. Therefore, I do not claim one true interpretation for the analysis of classroom discourse. However, I believe that the procedures that I used were good enough to strengthen trustworthiness. Additionally, Cameron (2001) suggests that discourse analysis "generates data by getting people to engage, or observing them while they engage, in an activity – talking – which is normal and familiar to them, rather than asking them to undertake an unusual or artificial task" (p. 14 &15). I believe that observing

learners in the oral skills class where students produced talk naturally further strengthened the methodology and validity of the study.

Researcher's Role and More on Trustworthiness

I had multiple roles during the time I spent in the oral skills class where I collected data. I functioned as a non-participant observer when the teacher was conducting her lesson. I wrote field notes while sitting in one corner. However, I became a participant-observer whenever a question was directed to me either by the teacher or students in various classroom activities. I also followed the teacher's requests such as distributing handouts, packing her materials and equipment, or preparing materials.

Another role I had was that of a learner. I had this sense of self from the very beginning. As a researcher, I was curios to learn from and with research participants rather than to express myself as an expert or authority so that I listened rather than talked (Glesne, 2006)

The participant students knew me as a doctoral student who was doing this research as part of my graduate studies. In addition to my identity as a doctoral student, my focal participants knew me as a non-native speaker of English who has been through similar language learning experiences, which I believe encouraged them to share their thoughts and experiences with me with confidence. I also offered them help with their English such as explaining a grammar point that they had a hard time in understanding or answering their pronunciation or vocabulary related questions. I never assisted them in their homework assignments for this or any other classes that they were taking.

All the students also knew that I was teaching one class in the program during the time of data collection and they knew that I was a colleague of the participant teacher. It is therefore possible that some participants might have provided inaccurate answers to my questions during the initial interviews or might have written imprecise experiences in their journals early in the semester about their teacher as they knew that we were friends. Truthfulness might have been a problem for some participants since certain opinions and behaviors are not accepted by teachers. Fortunately, when I conducted the final interviews with the participants, I had already developed rapport with them.

CHAPTER 4
FINDINGS

In this chapter, by utilizing mostly discourse from a larger data set, I provide examples of identity negotiation in an ESL classroom. In my analysis, I aim to address the following research questions:

1) How does positioning occur in an ESL classroom and how does such positioning facilitate or hinder classroom participation?
2) How do ESL learners negotiate positional identities, power, competence, and participation in classroom activities?
3) How does positioning interact with English language learning?

This chapter consists of three parts. In the first part, I describe how one of the two focal students, Hashim, negotiated his classroom participation, power, and competence. To describe his negotiation, I demonstrate how he positioned himself and assigned positions to others in classroom events. In my analysis, I use classroom discourse and refer to Hashim's perspectives and experiences in making further sense of his positioning. In the second part, I introduce my second focal participant, Ahmad, and discuss his classroom participation as well as his negotiation of competence, power, and participation in the same class. In this study, Hashim and Ahmad were chosen as the two focal participants because they both dominated classroom conversations and denied other students access to learning opportunities for most of the semester. I position these two learners as "problematic students". However, this study is not about disorderly behavior. I describe these two students as problematic not because they lacked enthusiasm or

commitment and misbehaved, but because they each demonstrated a unique participation behavior that usually impacted the flow of the class negatively. This chapter presents the sequences of classroom talk that illustrated the kinds of opportunities that Ahmad and Hashim had for exerting their influence over classroom talk (Mercer, 1995). Hashim mostly spoke out-of-turn, without being called on by his teacher Betsy. He frequently interrupted her to ask questions or share his opinion or knowledge. Ahmad did not interrupt Betsy or his classmates as much as Hashim did. However, each time he took a turn, Ahmad maintained the floor for a long time. Over the semester, like Hashim, Ahmad also displayed his knowledge and usually assigned strong, powerful positions to himself, which was read as "showing off" by his classmates. At the end of this chapter, in the third part, I provide a cross-case analysis by comparing Ahmad and Hashim and focusing on how these two talkative students developed powerful positional identities over the semester. Finally, I illustrate how Hashim became an accepted member of the class whereas Ahmad was denied membership by his classmates.

Hashim as a Case

Over the semester, the students in the oral skills class were engaged in various activities, including Betsy's lectures, student-led whole class discussions, individual presentations, and pair- or group-work, as I explained in detail in the third chapter. Hashim's participation in these various classroom practices was different, because of both its quantity and nature, than that of other students. Hashim was particularly articulate in teacher-led discussions, frequently taking turns to ask and answer questions. The Table 4 indicates Hashim's turn taking on the first day of class.

January 25, Monday; Duration: 01:03:53; Pair Work: 00:22:00	
Names	**Numbers of turns**
Betsy	52
Hashim	36
Fareed	9
Rolanda	8
Chen	8
Viresh	3
Takumi	1

Table 4: Hashim's Turn Taking

In examining the turn taking in this particular classroom session, I considered "turn constructional units" (Sacks et al., 1974), which refer to a variety of grammatical units, such as words, phrases, clauses, and sentences (Liddicoat, 2007). The units in my analysis included clarification requests, questions, answers, and possible completions (Liddicoat, 2007). I did not identify conversation fillers, such as yeah, uhu uhu, okay as turn constructional units and therefore did not include them in counting turns. When the chart is examined, it is easy to notice the disproportional turn taking among students. The number of Hashim's turns (36) in classroom conversation was higher than the number of turns that other students took. Hashim demonstrated a similar participation behavior in pair- or group-work. He frequently took turns and dominated conversations when he worked with a partner to complete a task, answer questions, or discuss a topic.

In this part, I describe Hashim's negotiation of power, competence, and participation in classroom events as well his interactive and reflexive positioning. Hashim's positional identities as a powerful and active member of the class dominated classroom discussions and frequently took away opportunities from his classmates. His

interactive and reflexive positioning acts included 1) engaging in teacher-like positions, 2) displaying symbolic capital, and 3) confronting the teacher regarding her methodological or pedagogical decisions.

"No, Completely Wrong!": Engaging in Teacher-like Positions

Hashim acted like a teacher in his interactions with his classmates during pair- or group-work and even in his interactions with his teacher Betsy during much of the time observed. He took on teacher-like positions by either telling his classmates what to do via assertive direct commands, paraphrasing their questions for the rest of the class even at times when not necessary, or providing feedback on their language usage. In one striking example, Betsy had formed pairs so that students could write DOs and DON'Ts for note taking, a topic that had been covered in the previous class. To complete the task, Hashim was assigned to work with Rolanda who was known as a diligent student by her classmates and teachers. In the oral skills class, I also observed Rolanda as an active student who frequently volunteered to answer Betsy's questions or to ask questions. Each pair was given a chart paper and markers to write key points. Rolanda placed the chart paper on her desk and picked a marker to write DOs for note-taking. Within minutes of beginning the discussion, Hashim gained the floor:

Excerpt 1
January 27, 2010

1. Hashim: Take just key words.
2. Rolanda: Take?
3. Hashim: Just key words. Take (0.2) just key words *(Hashim says it slowly*
4. *for Rolanda to write)*.

5. *(Hashim waits for Rolanda to finish writing. As soon as she does, Hashim*

6. *continues):*

7. Hashim: Yes. Four. Don't write full sentences.

8. *(Rolanda starts writing, but misspells "write".)*

9. Hashim: No, no, write. Write wrote written. It's okay; never mind.
10. Sentences. S.
11. Rolanda: If the teacher is explaining something and you're like uhm talking
12. with your (0.3)
13. Hashim: Hmm, pay attention. Pay attention.

14. *(Rolanda does not look satisfied.)*

15. Hashim: I don't understand, sorry.
16. Rolanda: Like ° Betsy is saying something and you ° *(whispers to Hashim;*
17. *Rolanda acts it out)*
18. Hashim: O::h, don't whisper to your classmate. That's it.
19. Rolanda: Don't?
20. Hashim: Whisper.
21. Hashim: I don't know. They call whisper in England. I don't know here.

22. *(Rolanda starts writing.)*

23. Hashim: Don't. Yeah, don't whisper yes yeah.
24. Rolanda: Don't?
25. Hashim: Whisper.

26. *(Rolanda cannot write.)*

27. Hashim: How to write that I don't know. Whisper maybe uhmm
28. Rolanda: Whisper?
29. Hashim: Yeah, that's okay. Never mind.
30. Rolanda: Whisper *(writes something eventually)*

31. *(Rolanda looks at Hashim; waiting for a possible completion)*

32. Hashim: To your classmate.
33. Rolanda: To you?
34. Hashim: To your classmate or to your partner.
35. Hashim: *(Turns to Betsy)* Excuse me? How to write (0.2) Do you know the
36. word whisper? When you say something.
37. Betsy: Whisper, yeah?
38. Hashim: Here call whisper also? How to spell that? Do you know?

39. Betsy: w-h-i-s-p-e-r *(spells fast and leaves.)*
40. Hashim: Wow.

41. *(Rolanda cannot catch Betsy's spelling; shows what she wrote to Hashim.)*

42. Hashim: No, completely wrong.
43. Hashim: Just s. Add s. Add one here Rolanda. Fine.

Excerpt 1 shows that Hashim engaged in teacher-like positions when he corrected Rolanda's English (Lines: 9, 32) and answered her questions and monitored answers (Lines: 2, 5, 9, 13, 15, 18, 24, 28). His strong positions were confirmed even at the very beginning of the conversation when Rolanda simply accepted his commands (Lines: 1, 5) and wrote what he said without discussion. In line 8, Rolanda attempted to reposition herself by rejecting the role of a "secretary" and tried to share her suggestion. Yet, her repositioning failed when she did not come up with the appropriate word, which turned into another chance for Hashim to position himself as an expert (Line: 13).

Harré and van Langenhove (1999) suggest that there are three possible ways of expressing and experiencing one's unique selfhood:

> by stressing one's agency in claiming responsibility for some action; by indexing one's statements with the point of view one has on its relevant world; or by presenting a description/evaluation of some past event or episode as a contribution to one's biography. (p. 24)

In the above exchange between Rolanda and Hashim, by referring to his previous educational experience in England, Hashim appeared to be "expressing his unique selfhood" and deliberately positioning himself as an academically high status individual. Rolanda, who immediately accepted his answer of whisper, accepted this position. However, Hashim did not know how to spell the word "whisper" either, which he acknowledged in line 22. It seemed that he did not want to elaborate on this (Line: 24)

because not knowing the word might have been a potential threat to his powerful reflexive positioning in the discourse. Perhaps in order not to lose control over Rolanda, Hashim asked Betsy about the spelling. Betsy's spelling was too fast for Rolanda who eventually wrote the word incorrectly. Hashim, instead of sharing the correct spelling with Rolanda, took up another teacher-like position by giving unrequested feedback on what Rolanda put on the paper: "No, completely wrong."

I chose this excerpt not only to show how Hashim engaged in a teacher-like positional identity but also to illustrate how he marginalized Rolanda who was known to be a leader and was often recognized by Betsy and other students as an initiator in various classroom events. Indeed, in the first interview when Betsy described her students, she positioned Rolanda as an achiever:

Betsy: Rolanda came here with no English, and she's an aggressive language learner. I mean not aggressive in a negative sense. Proactive. She is really good at that.

Indeed, in the Oral Skills class, Rolanda seemed to be confident in her abilities. She frequently volunteered to answer Betsy's questions and actively participated in pair or group work. When she had questions about grammar or vocabulary, she never seemed to be hesitant to ask them to Betsy. She would acknowledge her difficulty and ask for help. She was neither shy, nor quiet. When we look at Rolanda's interaction with Hashim in the above exchange, we see a completely different Rolanda. In the above exchange, she was not able to take on her typical strong positions and speak up. Hashim not only dominated and shaped the conversation, but also spoke for Rolanda who herself never got a chance to ask the correct spelling of the word "whisper" to Betsy. Hashim's question,

"Do you know the word?" (Line: 33) sounded like he was questioning Betsy's knowledge. The shift in the form of Hashim's questions is very interesting here. From "how to write" to "do you know" indicates Hashim's struggle for power. Asking about the spelling would have positioned Hashim as a student seeking information whereas asking whether Betsy knew the word or not positioned him as a competent language user who was in command of necessary vocabulary in the conversation. "Do you know the word?" simply assigned Hashim and Betsy the same status. Betsy might have interpreted Hashim's question as challenging her knowledge. It was probably this understanding that caused Betsy to spell the word so quickly and without a comprehensible context for its use. She neither provided a definition for the word, nor did she give an example for its usage as she typically would. Hashim thus kept Betsy from creating an opportunity to use his question for further instruction.

Hashim's reflexive positioning as someone in authority such as a teacher was even more evident when he did his first presentation. This first set of individual presentations occurred at the beginning of the semester and focused on an unforgettable event in each student's life. Betsy was standing at the back of the classroom, behind a camcorder, to videotape Hashim's presentation while Hashim walked to the front to tell his story using a transparency. The following excerpt shows how Hashim started his presentation and how the story line developed:

Excerpt 2
February 22, Monday

1. Hashim: Just before, excuse me, just before we start, Mrs. Betsy, you
2. *(referring to class)* can ask whatever you want, so don't be afraid

3. or something like that.
4. Betsy: (*laughs*) Okay, I know that they are very afraid of me. But that, no,
5. this is good point, yeah, you can ask (0.2) whatever you want.

6. (*Girls giggle*.)

7. Betsy: Okay, are you ready?
8. Hashim: Just wait. Wait wait.

9. *(Class laughs.)*

10. Betsy: Okay.
11. Hashim: Wait.

Before Hashim started his presentation, he asked Betsy not to start videotaping as he wanted to say something. He then engaged in a teacher-like position by encouraging his classmates "to ask whatever they want" during his presentation. He created power differentials by putting his classmates in a perceived position, as hesitant speakers. The direct command, "Don't be afraid", further strengthened his reflexive positioning of himself as a facilitator and someone powerful. Encouraging his classmates to participate and allowing them to speak up further highlighted power differentials between him and other students. What is interesting in this excerpt is Betsy's own repositioning. She found Hashim's encouragement quite irrelevant saying, "I know that they are very afraid of me" in an ironic way. Betsy therefore repositioned herself as a teacher who would provide the floor for students to speak freely. However, while she repositioned herself and established her teacher identity, she validated Hashim's powerful position in the discourse, saying, "But that, no, this is good point". She then positioned herself as the one who was in control of the conversation by checking with Hashim if he was ready to begin his presentation (Line: 6). Hashim's response to Betsy's request was quite interesting as

he told Betsy to wait by using direct commands (Lines: 7 & 10). With this assertive command, "wait" that was repeated four times, power circulated back to Hashim who seemed to establish his "subteacher" position in the discourse. Hashim's very similar reflexive positioning was also evident in his second presentation which was conducted near the end of the semester, in late April:

Excerpt 3
April 28, Wednesday

1. Hashim: Hello everybody. Good afternoon.
2. Class: Good afternoon.
3. Hashim: Nice to meet you and thanks for giving me this opportunity to
4. speak to you. First I would like to start by asking questions. How
5. many of you thinks that he is or she is eating healthy food? Rise
6. your hand if you think you are eating healthy food and no penalize
7. for wrong question or wrong answer.

8. *(Several students raise their hands.)*

9. Hashim: Okay, thank you. Today, I am going to talk about…

The extract above was taken from the beginning of Hashim's presentation which was on healthy food and diet. After greeting the class, Hashim asked his opening question "How many of you thinks…" followed by "no penalize for wrong question or wrong answer", which indicated his attempt to create power differentials. Penalizing requires one party to have power or control over another. By highlighting that he would not penalize them if they gave wrong answers, Hashim positioned himself as someone who had power over his classmates.

It was not only during pair work or discussion leader activities when Hashim took up teacher-like positions. Hashim positioned himself in similar ways during his interactions with Betsy. The following excerpt shows how he changed the direction of

Betsy's lecture when she was talking about the overall characteristics of the questions in a survey on stress that students had completed with a partner in class:

Excerpt 4
February 1, Monday

1.	Betsy:	If you read these (*referring to the survey questions*), the general
2.		pattern which is what we call *(writes on the board)* the trend here
3.		is that change. Change [
4.	Hashim:	[Trend, what does it mean?
5.	Betsy:	A trend is uhmm (0.3) a pattern uhmm (0.3) oh how do I explain a
6.		trend?
7.		[Uhmm
8.	Hashim:	[Just put it in a sentence *(with a rising intonation)*.
9.	Betsy:	Movement. Movement in a direction, but let's say that more and
10.		more people are buying Toyotas, okay? That would be a trend.
11.		Buying Toyotas.

While Betsy was saying that each question in the survey included a change in one's life and thus the survey questions followed a pattern, Hashim interrupted her to ask about the meaning of *trend*. Although Betsy provided a short definition, *pattern*, she did not seem fully prepared to switch her focus from content (e.g., talking about general characteristics of the survey items) to form (e.g., the definition of the word *trend*) when this question came at an unexpected moment during her lecture. This momentary hesitation gave Hashim the opportunity to engage in a powerful positioning move by telling Betsy what to do: "Just put it in a sentence." Noteworthy is Hashim's use of a direct imperative here rather than possible alternatives that would have created a more formal discourse with a more socially distant stance via politeness strategies such as "Could you give an example" or "Could you use it in a sentence so that I can better understand?" (Vann, Richardson-Bruna, & Escudero, 2006). The alternative use of a direct command, "Just

put it in a sentence", would not only enable Hashim to elicit attention but also indicated that he wanted to project his knowledge: He knew that vocabulary is taught in context (Vann, Richardson-Bruna, & Escudero, 2006). Betsy, who either did not hear or perhaps heard but ignored Hashim's suggestion (Line: 9), continued with an extended definition in context.

As seen from the four excerpts that I highlighted, Hashim often engaged in teacher-like positions by displaying varying participation behavior, such as interruptions, possible completions, asking/answering questions, and providing feedback at times when it was not necessary. His frequent use of assertive commands played a key role in his establishing a subteacher identity in the oral skills class.

"I've Read That in the Physics Before": Displaying Symbolic Capital

Hashim also differed from the other students in the oral skills class with his continual display of symbolic capital and negotiation of competence. Through frequent interruptions of his teacher and classmates, he brought up his own knowledge whenever possible and often asked questions related to vocabulary, pronunciation, or grammar. Although students normally raised their hands to bid for a turn, Hashim often blurted out comments or answers without waiting to be called on as in the following excerpt:

Excerpt 5
February 1, Monday

1.	Betsy:	If you had the measles, then your body produces antibiotics, and
2.		then you are immuned [you don't get the measles again.
3.	Hashim:	[Immune
4.	Chen:	O:h.
5.	Hashim:	Also, there's industrial immune and there's natural immune. I

6. don't know what you called it.
7. Betsy: Right.
8. Hashim: I've read that in the Physics before. The science.
9. Betsy: Right, [there's
10. Hashim: [There's people, as you said, they get sick and then get industrial
11. immune. But there's people from their nature they have good
12. immune. They call it natural immune, so there's *(falling*
13. *intonation)*
14. Betsy: That's right. Natural immunity. There's some people who are born
15. somehow
16. Hashim: good
17. Betsy: with immunity.

In the above exchange, Betsy was explaining the meaning of the word *immunization*. Hashim's initial attempt to join the conversation was interrupted by Chen's canonical expression, "oh" in the fourth line, signaling that Chen had comprehended the explanation provided by Betsy in lines 1 and 2 regarding the meaning of immunization. Hashim then joined the conversation immediately to say he knew about two different types of immunization. Betsy confirmed his competent position in line 7 by accepting Hashim's answer, "right". Hashim further supported his position by offering factual information (Line: 8), which was also accepted and confirmed by Betsy (Line: 9). Hashim continued to explain the difference between "industrial immune" and "natural immune", not allowing Betsy to take back the floor (Lines: 10-13). Betsy was able to regain the floor in line 14, confirming Hashim's expert-like position.

In this extract, Hashim's behavior broke the established "educational ground rules" (Mercer, 1995) of classroom discourse; he interrupted the teacher several times, asserting his own competence without being invited to the conversation. Overall, Hashim successfully gained the floor to build up the credibility of his expert position in line 5,

continued to develop it (Lines: 8, 10, 11, 12, 13) and despite Betsy's attempts to regain the floor (Lines: 7, 9, 14), he was able to maintain it through frequent interruptions.

Similarly, Hashim brought up his knowledge in order to retain power in numerous conversations as in the following story line which was part of a student-led discussion. In Excerpt 6, JJ was the discussion leader and his topic was death. Once the class had discussed the question "Would you like to be buried or cremated?", Viresh raised his hand to take a turn:

Excerpt 6
March 24, Wednesday

1. Viresh: Just a quick question. Why a person should only be buried or
2. cremated, not anything else?
3. JJ: Oh, okay, pardon?
4. Viresh: Why a person should only be buried or cremated, not anything
5. else, like in a water or something.
6. JJ: Can you.. slow down?
7. Viresh: Why a person should only be buried or cremated, not anything
8. else, like in a water something like that.

9. (*Several people: o::h; JJ still looks puzzled.)*

10. Hashim: I mean, excuse me, he said why should the person just have two
11. opinion just to buried or cremated. Have you, would you give us
12. another chance so we could discuss
13. Fareed: [another way
14. Hashim: [a little without buried or cremated. I think that's
15. Viresh: Yeah.
16. Hashim: Like disposal in the water, thrown in the ocean.

17. *(Class laughs.)*

18. JJ: Okay, okay come on.
19. Hashim: Because we came from different countries and different
20. nationalities, so.
21. JJ: Throwing human body in the ocean, somebody like a psycho.
22. Hashim: Yeah, for example the pyramid in Egypt for example, they're for
23. centuries ago up to now you can go watch them, so they say the

24. history for us and stuff like that. What do you think?

25. *(Long pause-12 seconds. Then class laughs.)*

26. JJ: That's kind of strange for me because in Korea, usually we used to buried.

In this excerpt, Viresh took a turn to ask why they only discussed two methods, burial and cremation, but not other options. Upon a clarification request (Pardon?) by JJ, Viresh repeated his question. Still, JJ did not understand him and asked him to speak slowly (Line: 6). After Viresh's third repetition of his question, Hashim jumped in the conversation (Line: 10) to paraphrase Viresh's question for JJ who did not understand Viresh. Fareed also tried to take part in the meaning-making process (Line: 13), but his attempt was not successful as Hashim immediately regained the floor. To further clarify Viresh's question, Hashim gave two examples (Line: 16), which were not taken seriously by JJ who somehow ridiculed him further (Lines: 18, 21). Hashim, quite uncomfortable that his examples were criticized, resisted this repositioning and brought his knowledge of pharaohs in Egypt to the discussion. By using factual information, he was able to reposition himself as someone knowledgeable. He also put JJ on the spot by asking his opinion. By this forced positioning of JJ, the story line appeared to shift from meaning-making to competition. JJ was not able to argue against or support his own opinion since he did not seem to understand Hashim's example and question because of grammatical mistakes. Hashim, in turn, was able to retain power over JJ and others. This story line revealed how Viresh and Fareed's contributions tended to be short, muted, and tentative because of Hashim's interruptions. Although the question was initially brought up by Viresh, Viresh was unable to take any turns in the rest of the conversation. As a result,

Fareed and Viresh never gained opportunities to convey their knowledge or opinions to the class.

There were also times when Hashim displayed his knowledge of the English language or asked language related questions to show what he already knew, as Excerpt 7 shows:

Excerpt 7
March 15, Monday

1. Betsy: In traditional families, the role of the mother, the part of the mother
2. the function of the mother is to take care of the home. In a
3. traditional family, what's the role of the father? To go out, make
4. money, bring it back to the family. And here we're talking about
5. the role of government. Yes.
6. Hashim: There is rule with r-u-l-e (*spells it*).
7. Betsy: Okay, there's this word (writes role on the board)
8. Hashim: No, r-u-l-e (*spells it*)
9. Betsy: Oh, okay. This one has a little different pronunciation. This has
10. an u sound ru::le. U. And this one is o, ro::le. Okay, good question.
11. Everybody say this with me. Rule.

12. (Class repeats the two words several times.)

13. Betsy: Good, anybody still confused? Yes, Hashim.
14. Hashim: Just, how did you know to pronounce that?
15. Betsy: How do I know that it's role and rule?
16. Hashim: Yeah.
17. Hashim: I mean have you got any idea or basics something like that?
18. Betsy: Well, in this case, actually for once, because a lot of times English
19. spelling does not match the sound, but here it does. An o sound is o
20. and then here you have u sound so that so here in this case it's
21. actually the sound of the vowel. Other questions about
22. pronunciation? All right, let's listen again (*they go back to*
23. *listening*.)

In this example, after Betsy's sixth word (mother) in line 1, Hashim raised his hand, which was quite atypical of his classroom participation style. Betsy seemed to ignore his request for participation as she continued to speak even though Hashim's hand remained

up. When he was finally given the opportunity to speak, he provided the word, *rule*. Betsy read this as a question although Hashim's statement, "There is rule with r-u-l-e" was not in question form. Betsy confirmed Hashim's positions of a participator and knowledge maker by focusing on the pronunciation difference between *rule* and *role*. This way, the conversation shifted from content to form. Later in the conversation, Hashim took another turn asking Betsy how she knew that the pronunciation of those two words were different. Whether he really did not know the answer or wanted to challenge Betsy remains ambiguous. What is certain, though, is his creating an opportunity for himself to display his knowledge of the word, *rule,* and to lead the rest of the conversation in the direction he wanted.

Hashim's displaying his symbolic capital was not always explicit. He occasionally displayed his competence implicitly, which positioned him as superior or competent. These incidents usually included his making comments on the difficulty level of the subject matter or on the difficulties that his friends were having. For example, in the following excerpt, the class had listened to short lectures on different topics to answer some comprehension questions. At the end of the listening activity, Betsy asked the class if they found the dialogue difficult to understand:

Excerpt 8
February 1, Monday

1. Betsy: All right, so how did you do? Was that easy?
2. Hashim: It's okay, easy, more than easy.
3. Betsy: Good.
4. Rolanda: It's not that easy.
5. Betsy: Sometimes easy, sometimes not so easy. Anyone who would like
6. to practice with this again? Perfect, if you wanna stay a few
7. minutes after class or I can loan you the tape that you can use with

8. the tape recorder.

In the above exchange, Hashim stated that the listening activity was very easy for him. Rolanda appeared to feel uncomfortable with the comment and disagreed with him saying it was not "that easy". It was interesting to state here that it was only Hashim who answered Betsy's question. Furthermore, he took the opportunity to implicitly display his superior competence regarding his listening ability. In a similar incident, Hashim took a turn to address a pronunciation difficulty Rolanda experienced. In an activity in which Betsy focused on pronunciation, she taught them the word *indiscriminately*. After several turns of "repeat after me" , Betsy asked students to practice the pronunciation of the words "discriminate" and "indiscriminately" with a partner. When the practice was over, Rolanda raised her hand and said:

Excerpt 9
February 1, Monday

1. Rolanda: Betsy, I have a problem to say indiscriminately.
2. Betsy: Yeah, yeah. That's the challenge. [Let's let's
3. Hashim: [You just say it. That's it.
4. Betsy: Let's go back to (0.3) here's (0.3) remember that our verb is to
5. discriminate.

Rolanda had a hard time pronouncing the word *indiscriminately* and asked for help from Betsy. Betsy seemed to encourage Rolanda saying it was challenging. After Betsy's confirmation, Hashim took a turn and gave unrequested advice to Rolanda "You just say it. That's it" which signaled that it was easy for Hashim to pronounce. Rolanda's difficulty had became an opportunity for Hashim to show his competence. By his unrequested advice, Hashim positioned himself as superior to Rolanda. Yet Betsy, who

went on to further explain the related pronunciation rules, ignored his reflexive positioning.

"Just One Minute? That's Not Fair!": Confronting the Teacher's Methodological Decisions

Hashim always commented on and even questioned simple classroom instructions. For example, other students never questioned why a certain amount of time was allotted for a particular activity. However, for Hashim, this always meant negotiation as demonstrated in the following excerpt, taken from the beginning of a group work activity for which students were expected to narrate what they did over the past weekend:

Excerpt 12
February 1, Monday

1.	Betsy:	Student A is going to talk for one minute. [And
2.	Hashim:	Just one minute? That's not fair.
3.	Betsy:	[B is going to talk *(writes on the board)*
4.	Hashim:	Wow, weekend (0.2) three days weekend Mrs. Betsy.
5.	Betsy:	That's the challenge. The challenge is to talk for one minute about
6.	Hashim:	[It's three days.
7.	Betsy:	Well, that's right. You can start Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.
8.	Hashim:	[Thirty seconds?
9.	Betsy:	[You can talk what twenty seconds about Friday
10.	Hashim:	Yeah?
11.	Betsy:	20 seconds about Saturday and
12.	Hashim:	[I'll leave the rest for the homework. (*laughing*)
13.	Betsy:	Okay, (*laughing*) so we'll start, and student A talks first.

As the Excerpt 12 shows, Hashim complained about the amount of time that Betsy gave students for classroom activities. He communicated his unhappiness with the time he was given to complete the task by saying "That's not fair", which was ignored by Betsy. However, Hashim insisted and furthered the conversation. His insistence on changing Betsy's decision is seen in lines 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10. Hashim's laughter in line 12 signaled

that this was meant to be a joke, which constructed Hashim as witty and yet still critical and knowledgeable regarding Betsy's methodological decision.

At other times, Hashim did not hesitate to complain about the speed rate of Betsy's speech. At least five times during the semester, he asked Betsy if it would be possible for her to speak faster when Betsy checked with the whole class if they comprehended her speech:

Excerpt 13
February 8, Monday

1. Betsy: You know, your notes look pretty good. You guys, I mean, just the
2. arrangement looks quite good I can see. My notes are uhm…
3. Hashim: I mean because you were explaining so slowly. That's it.
4. Betsy: So, you felt like it was slow you could write (*inaudible*)
5. Hashim: (*inaudible*) A little bit faster then I can't take notes. The ideas were
6. so clear and I mean the topic wasn't complicated. That's why.
7. Betsy: Good.
8. Hashim: So, sometimes it doesn't work.
9. Betsy: Okay, ding ding ding a minute. I think Hashim had a very good
10. comment there. He goes, you know this is a real simple idea. You
11. weren't talking too fast. It was easy for me to take notes. But if it's a
12. complicated idea it's harder and we talked about some things you
13. could do. You could tape record with the professor's permission.
14. You may have to go back right after class and add things and get
15. things sorted out. These were my notes and I made these in advance.
16. This is what I was speaking from. […] This is just practice and
17. (0.3) here (0.3) here's this (0.2) Hashim is right. This is a lot of just
18. straight information. Do you remember last week we talked about
19. dense information versus [...]

Betsy praised students for the quality of notes that they took after listening to a 45-minute lecture. Hashim resisted the positioning claiming that they were able to take good notes because she was speaking slowly and the topic was not complicated (Lines: 3, 5, and 6). Although Hashim was critical of Betsy's speaking and the nature of her lecture, Betsy initially misinterpreted his comments and gave him positive feedback on his

performance: “Good”. Betsy continued with her initial positioning and seemed glad that Hashim accomplished the task without difficulty (Line: 7). Hashim resisted her interactive positioning and overtly stated that it was not useful because he preferred more complex topics and faster speech. Betsy validated his comment by repeating what Hashim said and then taking her own personal position on his comment by stating “I think Hashim had a very good comment there” (Line: 9). Betsy’s use of Hashim’s words, “He goes you know you weren’t talking too fast […]”, was a powerful involvement strategy by communicating that Betsy knew what Hashim requested and she wanted to involve Hashim in an act that was directly related to his self-interest. Hashim’s repositioning was explicitly accepted by Betsy who eventually said, “Here’s this… Hashim is right.” While Betsy’s presentation here reflected her locally constructed identity as one who attended to her students’ needs and sought to help them (Vann, Richardson-Bruna, & Escudero, 2006), her interactive positioning gave power to Hashim.

Other times, Hashim was more assertive when he not only expressed his dissatisfaction with the material covered, but he also advised Betsy about what she should do, as the Excerpt 14 shows. This excerpt was taken from a conversation that took place before the class started. Betsy, as usual, came to class early to get ready. She was placing a few discussion prompts on the board and arranging chairs for the discussion leader activities that students were going to have. A few other students, including Hashim, were also early on that day. While Betsy was busy taping up two large chart papers on the chalk board, Hashim called on her twice:

Excerpt 14
March 29, Monday

1. Hashim: Miss Betsy. Miss Betsy.
2. Betsy: Yes?
3. Hashim: I think I found this assignment a little bit I mean, how to go and
4. with finding stuff like that you know.
5. Betsy: Which one? The part in the book?
6. Hashim: Yeah looking for native speakers, spend time and stuff like that
7. Betsy: So, two native speakers it was hard. *(Betsy is about to leave to get*
8. *something from her office as she takes her key out of her pocket*
9. *and walks towards the door. Hashim continues to speak)*
10. Hashim: Yeah, It's little bit I mean. I don't know. I think change this
11. assignment or something. *(Betsy leaves)*. I think waste of time. It
12. does not benefit me in the TOEFL I think.

After getting Betsy's attention, Hashim gave feedback on the assignment that they completed at home. One part of the assignment required finding two native speakers to interview and observe. Using conversation fillers in lines 3 and 4, such as "a little bit I mean", "stuff like that", "you know", Hashim either could not find the appropriate words to share his opinion regarding the usefulness of this assignment or did not want to be too direct about it at first. Betsy asked if it was hard to find two native speakers. Yet, her attention was divided between Hashim's feedback and class preparation. When she was about to leave the room, Hashim advised her that she change that particular assignment, which Betsy did not respond to verbally but smiled and left the room in a hurry to pick something up from her office. Yet, Hashim continued to speak to himself saying the activity simply wasted his time and he did not see any value in it in terms of his TOEFL preparation. Although his criticism of the assignment was not taken up by Betsy in this particular conversation, Hashim was more forceful and clearer at other times, as the following excerpts show.

Excerpt 15
March 29, Monday

1. Betsy: Everybody, we are gonna do just a quick warm-up for the first
2. discussion. So, get your paper, your notes for the discussion.
3. Please stand up. And please find a partner that does not speak your
4. language. Someone you usually don't talk to. So how about,
5. Fareed. Let's see. You can talk to X and Takumi to Chen and
6. Ahmad to Gui Min and Rolanda to Hashim.
7. Hashim: Oh, no, not Rolanda please.
8. Betsy: So, you refuse?
9. Hashim: Yeah, I think so.
10. Class: No:::, come on!(*laughter, overlapping talk, noise*).
11. Betsy: Just, just for two minutes.

12. *(Students stand up to find their partners.)*

13. Betsy: And decide who is 1, who is 2 or A and B. So who's gonna talk
14. first here (*looking at Fareed and his partner*) Viresh, Fareed,
15. (*pointing As in each pair*) Who is gonna talk first here?
16. Ahmad: Yeah, me.
17. Betsy: Hashim, who's gonna be A?
18. Hashim: Just let us decide. We're republicans, so.
19. Betsy: All right.

20. *(Class laughs. Betsy seems to be surprised and she also laughs.)*

21. Hashim: [She's A
22. Betsy: [I think I'll leave. I think I'll just leave. There is no point in my
23. being here. My students are taking over. Oh, well. Let's see. Chen,
24. who is A?

Betsy was trying to form pairs for a warm-up activity when power constantly circulated in this interaction. She formed three pairs and those six students immediately moved around to sit next to their partners. Notice, however, that Hashim changed the power dynamics when he persistently objected to working with Rolanda (Line: 7) and told Betsy that students should decide who should be A or B (Line: 17). In turn, Betsy made a particular kind of complex and powerful move to establish her own position saying that her students were taking over and that she should leave. By being ironic, she added

authority to her role as teacher. Note how Betsy expertly made this shift so as to maintain social alignment with the class and with Hashim.

In those moments when Hashim persistently tried to negotiate time allotted by Betsy for pair- or group-work, or difficulty level of a material as well as its usefulness, or questioning why he should be working with student A, B, or C, it is possible to say that he was simply wasting the instructional time and the conversation was going nowhere.

Ahmad as a Case

In Part I, I described how one focal participant, Hashim, positioned himself in ways that denied opportunities to other students to participate in classroom events or activities. Another focal participant in this study was Ahmad, who attended the oral skills class from the fourth class session on. In this second part, I describe Ahmad's participation in classroom activities and explore his interactive and reflexive positioning to better understand how it impacted his and other students' access to learning opportunities in class.

I chose Ahmad as a case because, like Hashim, he dominated classroom discussions. However, unlike Hashim, Ahmad rarely interrupted his teacher and classmates to take turns. Instead, he dominated conversations by bringing his symbolic capital (e.g., linguistic capital) to the conversation whenever possible. He was more fluent than other students in the oral skills class and used more wide-ranging and complex vocabulary. In the eyes of other students, Ahmad had "conversational charisma" (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999, p. 30). Additionally, he was too proud of himself, which was indeed evident in his interactions with others. He therefore often demonstrated

strong aspects of his self, which I show and describe below. Another difference Ahmad had was his long answers. He had problems in organizing his thoughts to provide a brief yet coherent answer or comment. In turn, his participation behavior made him look like someone who favored showing off in class with his language abilities. His frequent reflexive positionings of himself as a competent, proud language learner and the classmates' interactive positionings of him as an arrogant, inconsiderate student gradually made him an outcast over the course of the semester. Overall, Ahmad developed a unique positional identity in this class by a) displaying particular aspects of his selfhood, b) displaying his competence, and c) producing long turns.

"I'm a Scientist!": Displaying Particular Aspects of Selfhood

Frequently over the semester, Ahmad portrayed strong aspects of his selfhood. One of these was his reflexive positioning of himself as a scientist. One day, Rolanda was the discussion leader. Students were expected to discuss if the world would end one day and justify their answers. Before moving on to the whole-class discussion, Betsy asked students to warm up in small groups practicing Rolanda's discussion prompts. When groups were finished, the class engaged in a whole-class discussion. To the question, "Do you think humans will disappear some day?", Ahmad raised his hand and said:

Ahmad: According to me, I think that humans will disappear some day because it depends on anyone's belief. According to my belief, my religion, it's written in my religion book that humans will disappear some day. And also I'm a scientist. And I'm referring to, I am basing it on facts. Someday the universe is (0.3) One day it's proven that the Sun as the source of energy will run out of energy. With the energy, coming from the Sun, is the source of life.

In his answer to the question whether humans would disappear one day or not, Ahmad referred to two sources to support his opinion. He argued that humans would disappear and referenced a religious text he believed in as the evidence for his argument. Later on, in the conversation, he positioned himself as a scientist. This way, Ahmad supported his position by referring to facts, which enabled him to establish credibility. His answer had to be right and accepted by others because he was "basing it on facts" as a scientist. Interestingly enough, Ahmad had a high school diploma only. Nevertheless, he positioned himself as a scientist several times during the semester. His explicit positioning as a scientist also appeared in his diary entry:

Ahmad: First of all, as a scientist, I know that scientists are open-minded and it's very surprising to meet a scientist who is very limited (From Ahmad's diary: 03/2010).

Ahmad was elaborating on an experience in his diary where he positioned himself as an open-minded scientist and evaluated the performance of a person whom he had recently met from this perspective. Ahmad's self presentation as a scientist is worth further analyzing. In their discussion of positioning and selfhood, Harré and van Langenhove (1999) claim that "I" is used not to name or to refer to oneself or to one's body. "Its use expresses one's personal identity" (p. 7). It is used to "display the singularity of our selfhood" (p. 7). By using first person indexical, I, and saying "I am a scientist", Ahmad singularized himself. He made himself unique by bringing up his perceived identity as a scientist, which would give him symbolic capital and therefore power in class.

In addition to positioning himself as a scientist, Ahmad took up various similar positions that enabled him to exercise power over other students. The following excerpt, which was taken from Ahmad's end-of-term presentation with Takumi, shows how Ahmad portrayed his singularity and therefore his superiority over Takumi. Although all other students had conducted their presentations individually, Ahmad and Takumi co-presented because they both wanted to present on the same topic: Japanese anime. In the warm-up phase of their presentation, Ahmad and Takumi showed a number of pictures and asked the class what was common in them. Once a few people responded saying they were anime, Takumi introduced their presentation topic:

Excerpt 2
April 26, Monday

1. Takumi: So, our topic today is Japanese anime.
2. Ahmad: We chose this topic because first of all we are very interested in
3. Japanese anime. For Takumi, it might be obvious that he chose this
4. topic because he is from Japan, but me I am not from the same
5. country as Takumi. I'm from X, but there I'm a drawer. I
6. like drawing and I'm really interested in Japanese anime because I
7. like this style. That's the style that I usually use.

In the introduction of their presentation, right after Takumi introduced their topic, which was Japanese anime, Ahmad continued to explain why they chose it. This was the typical structure of presentations. Each student was expected to tell why he or she chose his or her topic. However, what was unique and interesting in this introduction was Ahmad's further explanation. By positioning himself as a "drawer" and referring to his unique ability and style "I like this style. That's the style I usually use", Ahmad was

displaying his expertise which, according to Ahmad, Takumi did not possess. van Langenhove and Harré (1999) state:

> Having presented oneself as a unique person through one's choice of grammatical devices appropriate to that act, one is then in a position to offer personal explanations of personal behavior. There seem to be at least three distinct ways of explaining personal behavior: by referring to one's powers and one's rights to exercise them, by referring to one's biography (what one did, saw, etc. and what happened to one) and by referring to personal experiences that one has had as legitimating certain claims, for example, 'expertise'. When a person is engaged in a deliberate self-positioning process this often will imply that they try to achieve specific goals with their act of self-positioning. This requires one to assume that they have a goal in mind. Paraphrasing Goffman's conception of 'strategic interaction', this could be called 'strategic positioning. (p. 24, 25)

With his strategic positioning, that is, positioning himself as a "drawer", Ahmad had a certain goal. He wanted to show his expertise in drawing to others and that he had more symbolic power than Takumi. Takumi was positioned as a student who picked that topic (Japanese anime) not because of any unique feature or ability he had, but only because he was from Japan.

Ahmad's pride in himself and desire to be unique and therefore "visible" to others were also evident in his unforgettable story presentation. At the beginning of the semester, each student was required to narrate an unforgettable event in his/her life. In my field notes, I included a summary of Ahmad's story and described the ways he positioned himself in it. A visual representation of his story drawn by Ahmad is also provided below.

Expanded Field Notes
April 24, 2010
Wednesday; 03:02pm – 03:16pm

> Today students continue their presentations on unforgettable events. Today's first presentation is Ahmad's. He has one transparency. Here is his story: Ahmad's

friends organized a “swimming pool party” in a hotel and invited him. Ahmad went to the party where his friends were having lots of fun in the swimming pool. Ahmad had a big problem: he did not know how to swim. Everybody was enjoying the party but not Ahmad. He sat by the pool for a while watching his friends having fun. Then, “some of his friends started noticing that he couldn’t swim”. Ahmad said, “So, I didn’t allow them to know that!”. He made a decision, walked toward the pool, and he jumped into the pool “in order to catch everybody’s attention”. By doing so he thought he would be “the star of the swimming pool party”. He was now very happy. However, since he did not know how to swim, he began drowning. A few minutes later, he became unconscious and was taken to the emergency.

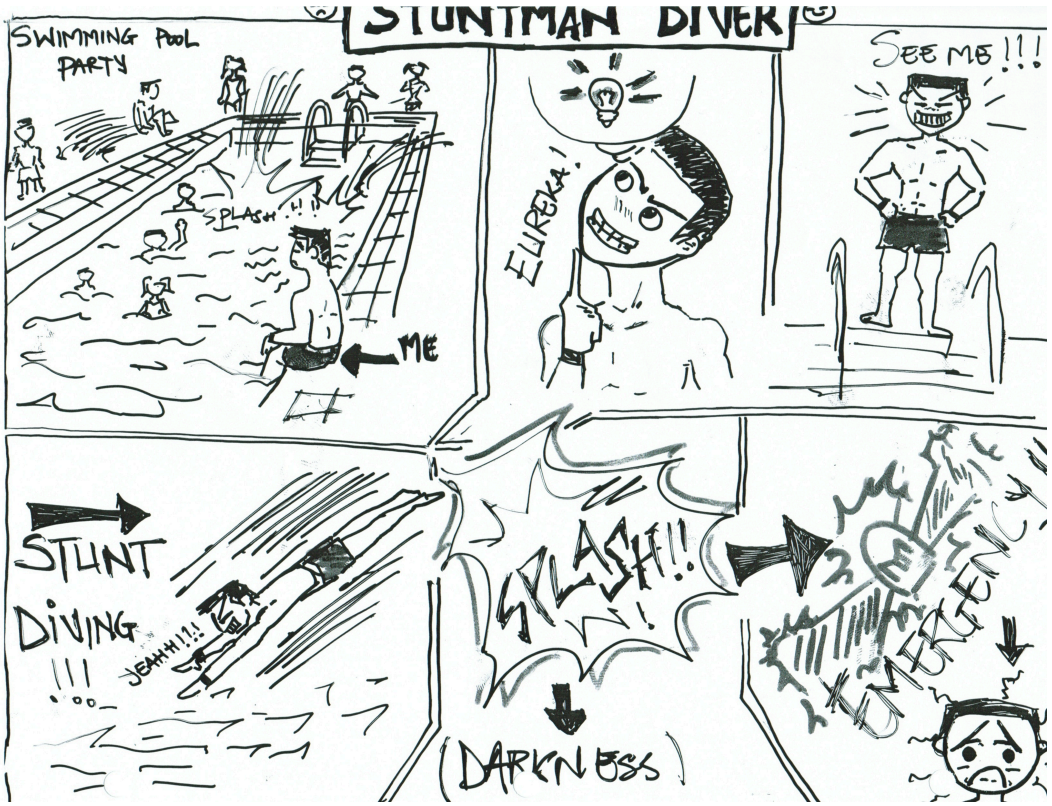


Figure 3: Visual representation of Ahmad's story

His desire to be recognized is clearly evident in his story, in his own words, “I would be the star of the swimming pool party” by diving into the pool. In addition to his reflexive positionings which seemed to give power to Ahmad and gave him more status, Ahmad was assigned similar powerful positions by the classroom teacher, Betsy, which is

clearly seen in Excerpt 3. On that day, students had completed a listening task on green tea. After they answered a number of comprehension questions, Betsy asked them the following question:

Excerpt 3
April 21, Wednesday

1.	Betsy:	Do you think green tea is healthy or not?
2.	Class:	Healthy.
3.	Betsy:	Healthy. Uhm, in what ways? I mean why do you think it's
4.		healthy?
5.	Gui Min:	Helps food goes down.
6.	Betsy:	Oh, it helps you digest your food. Okay, any other thing?
7.	Ahmad:	Reduce cholesterol.
8.	Betsy:	Reduces cholesterol. How do you know that? Did you read about it
9.		or learn about it in school?
10.	Ahmad:	No, because my mother used to use it for diet so.
11.	Betsy:	Your mum used it to reduce cholesterol.
12.	Ahmad:	Yeah, yeah.
13.	Betsy:	You know Ahmad is gonna be a doctor.
14.	Class:	Wow.
15.	Betsy:	Yeah, maybe he'll be prescribing green tea to his patients.
16.	Ahmad:	Yeah.
17.	Betsy:	So, how often do you drink green tea?
18.	Rolanda:	Everyday.

In this excerpt, Betsy asked the class if they thought green tea was healthy or not. She therefore opened a new discussion by asking the class to give an opinion. The class provided an answer saying "healthy". Betsy validated their answer by repeating it in line 3. Although she validated their answer, she then asked for evidence to support this claim in lines 3 and 4 when she said, "I mean why do you think it's healthy?". In response to Betsy's request for evidence about students' answer that green tea is healthy, Gui Min responded by saying, "helps food goes down." Betsy responded to Gui Min by providing a recast, a form of implicit error correction, and validated Gui Min's comment. Betsy

tried to elicit further answers by asking the class, “Okay, any other thing?” (Line: 6). This time, Ahmad took a turn and provided his claim: reduce cholesterol. Betsy accepted Ahmad’s answer, and elicited further response from him, which Ahmad provided. Her follow up question, “How do you know that? Did you read about it or learn about it in school?”, assigned Ahmad a unique position. What he knew was not just an opinion or something simple, but it was some sort of knowledge one could gain from a reliable source such as school. Ahmad acknowledged that his mother drank green tea and that’s how he knew. A new story line began when Betsy shifted the focus of the conversation to Ahmad’s future goal, “You know, Ahmad is gonna be a doctor”. The “wow”s by the class confirmed Ahmad’s unique position and therefore his singularity.

In addition to unique powerful positions Ahmad took up over the semester, he further gained status by displaying his competence, which came mostly in linguistic form. It is his negotiation of this competence that I describe next.

“Coward. I Can Spell the Word. C-o-w-a-r-d.”: Displaying Symbolic Capital

Although placed in the oral skills class because of his proficiency level in listening and speaking, Ahmad seemed slightly more advanced than his classmates, especially in terms of his vocabulary use and fluency, which was indeed acknowledged by Betsy in one of the interviews and during our informal conversations.

Several times during the semester, the students listened to various audio-recorded academic lectures in class. The following excerpt was taken from one of those sessions in which students listened to a lecture on a topic in chemistry. Before students listened to

the lecture, Betsy helped them get ready for the listening exercise by going over some related vocabulary. At one point, she asked students the meaning of ph:

Excerpt 4
March 15, Monday

5.	Betsy:	Right now, we're just getting ready for the lecture. The first thing
6.		we are gonna do is just to think about the vocabulary and a little bit
7.		of concepts as a preview uhm for the lecture. Well, one important
8.		concept in here is the idea of ph. From your chemistry class, what
9.		is ph?
10.	Ahmad:	Hydrogen. Potential hydrogen.
11.	Betsy:	It actually means, yeah, the potential of hydrogen, and in
12.		chemistry, what do we use ph to talk about?
13.	Hashim:	To measure.
14.	Betsy:	Okay, we've gotta a range.
15.	Ahmad:	To measure from [zero to fourteen.
16.	Betsy:	Okay, it goes from zero to fourteen.
17.	Betsy:	And I think seven is the neutral.
18.	Ahmad:	Yeah.
19.	Betsy:	And what do we use this to talk about or measure?
20.	Ahmad:	To determine the acidity of substance.
21.	Betsy:	The acidity of the substance. That's right, so which direction is
22.		more acid?
23.	Ahmad:	To the left.
24.	Betsy:	Okay, this means when we go this way, we've got more uhm
25.		greater increasing acid and when we come this way, do you know
26.		that other word?
27.	Ahmad:	Basic.
28.	Betsy:	Base.
29.	Ahmad:	Base. Okay (*laughs*)
30.	Betsy:	Okay, so here we're increasing the base or the alkaline. So, if I said
31.		that some water had a ph of one [
32.	Ahmad:	It's acid.
33.	Betsy:	It would be very acid. Right, very acid.

In terms of its structure, Excerpt 4 has many features of a traditional teacher-student interaction (Mercer, 1995). Betsy asked several questions to pursue various teaching aims. As seen from the story line, Ahmad was the first student to answer Betsy's question

(Line: 6). Only Hashim managed to take part in the conversation (Line: 9). It was only once, though, and very brief. The rest of the conversation included turns between Ahmad and Betsy. Ahmad was able to assert some "intellectual authority" (Mercer, 1995, p. 19) over the topic discussed. In this conversation, what helped Ahmad position himself as a knowledgeable student was not only the linguistic capital he possessed, but also his knowledge of the content. A very similar type of positioning is also seen in the following conversation (Excerpt 5). At the point the transcript began, Betsy was asking factual listening comprehension questions about the possible damage caused by acid rains, which the students had listened to at home:

Excerpt 5
March 24, Wednesday

1. Betsy: What was the other kind of, so all of these are ecological damage.

2. *(Many people give answers simultaneously; Ahmad manages to gain the floor.)*

3. Ahmad: It's dissolving monuments and buildings.
4. Betsy: Good. [Yeah, like the Taj Mahal.
5. Viresh: [Architectural damage.
6. Ahmad: [Taj Mahal.

7. *(Overlapping talk continues.)*

8. Viresh: [Architectural damage.
9. Ahmad: [(incomprehensible)
10. Betsy: [Just a second.
11. Viresh: Architectural damage. (*Several people laugh - at his effort I*
12. *believe*)
13. Betsy: Architectural damage, okay. You guys together are giving the full
14. answer. Architectural damage, general idea. Details from Ahmad.
15. Good. Anybody want to add something?

This story line started with Betsy's question about the other type of damage that occurred due to acid rain as described in the lecture. While a few other students attempted to

answer the question, Ahmad was able to gain the floor (Line: 3). Viresh attempted to join the conversation three times (Lines: 5, 8, 11) raising his voice each time he attempted to take a turn. Finally, Betsy assisted Viresh in taking a turn by silencing Ahmad and other students who were talking simultaneously. Eventually, she gave positive feedback to all students for their participation, but particularly highlighted Ahmad's contribution (Line: 14), therefore assigning him the position of a successful contributor. In this class, students like Viresh were not always this lucky as most of the time they either kept quiet and left the floor to Ahmad or Hashim who were able to "monopolize the attention of their teacher, through good behavior" (Mercer, 1995, p. 47), such as answering her questions.

On the same day, Betsy explicitly addressed Ahmad's participation and frequent turn-takings. In the following story line, we see how power came into play when Betsy called on students other than Ahmad:

Excerpt 6
March 24, Wednesday

1. Betsy: All right, to me, this is the most interesting thing in the whole
2. lecture. Bonus number 1. How do scientists know the acid rain has
3. occurred only in the last two hundred years? Anybody know?
4. Anybody but Ahmad? *(Several people laugh.)*
5. Betsy: Martina.
6. Martina: Because of the industrialization.
7. Betsy: Well, that's the reason. Did they actually get the evidence?
8. Ahmad: They said that two thousands years ago.
9. *(Class laughs.)*

In this story line, Betsy asked a question. It was not just a question, but it was "the most interesting thing in the whole lecture" for Betsy. Betsy stated that she would seek an

answer from anyone but Ahmad and then nominated Martina for a turn at talk. She therefore made an assumption and positioned Ahmad as an able student who would be likely to provide an answer. Indeed, Ahmad could not help taking the turn (Line: 8) to answer Betsy's next question.

In addition to displaying his content related knowledge, Ahmad also used his linguistic capital quite often during classroom conversations. This usually included using more advanced level vocabulary and checking with classmates if they knew or understood the words he used. I provide one example below.

1. Ahmad: I think that like Hashim I disagree, because I think, according to
2. me, that's my personal opinion, I am not referring to facts, that's
3. my personal opinion and that you'd be coward, you know?
4. Chen: Coward?
5. Ahmad: Coward. I can spell the word c-o-w-a-r-d.
6. Chen: Coward (*repeating the word to practice pronunciation*).

As the excerpt shows, Ahmad used the word "coward" when he disagreed with others who argued that euthanasia should be provided as an option to seriously ill patients. Chen repated the word coward, signaling that she did not know what it meant or how it was written (Line: 4). Ahmad spelled the word and Chen repeated it for pronunciation practice. In many other similar instances, Ahmad used unfamiliar vocabulary, asked others if they understood, and either spelled the words for them or provided a definition, thereby positioning himself as a competent language learner.

In addition to using his symbolic capital in class, another unique participation behavior Ahmad developed over time was his long turns, which I demonstrate below.

Producing Long Turns

Another characteristic of Ahmad's participation in class was the quantity of his talk which was different than that of other students, as shown in the following excerpt:

Excerpt 7
March 29, Monday

1. Hashim: In fact, I would like to ask question. Are there any methods or
2. way to improve my memory? I mean I don't know maybe you got
3. an idea.
4. Martina: For me, I used to have really bad memory. Really bad memory.
5. But, I start organizing my thought. I (incomprehensible) notes in
6. my desk, things on my cell phone to ring at some time, so I
7. remember things. Well, up to now, is really helpful.
8. Hashim: [Thank you
9. Rolanda: [I do have another question. Do you think that it's good to take
10. drugs to remember things?
11. Martina: Well, I don't know I mean. There are people for them is really hard
12. to concentrate, so they took drugs, but I think that I don't know.
13. That's something to ask doctor. But maybe if you have problem to
14. concentrate, maybe is like uhm like uhm some health problem, but
15. I don't know. I really don't.

16. *(Ahmad raises his hand.)*

17. Martina: Yes.
18. Ahmad: I would like to answer two questions. First of all, the question
19. about to take drugs how to improve memory. I think most of the
20. time is not a good way to improve the memory because most of the
21. substances that are advised to use to memory are addictive. They
22. are addictive kind of that you come addicted to those substances.
23. And potential that you got stuck. It only depends on the substance.
24. When you like the substance, you won't be able to use your
25. potential high efficiency. And about the second question, I'd like to
26. answer, about Hashim's one about what techniques he can use to
27. improve his memory. I'd like to say there are many techniques. It
28. depends on how good what type of learning you are using. Maybe
29. there are visual learners. There are visual learners. There are people
30. who images to memorize, to memorize the content really well.
31. There are some people who like letters. You know when they read,
32. they feel comfortable when they are reading. And there are people
33. who like just listening. Like just listening. Listening someone

34. talking to.. how to memorize something to.. So I think it depends
35. on you. You can use diagrams, you can use sticks. People write
36. down what they like to memorize and keep them somewhere so
37. every time they like to remember of what that's something about
38. who just to check those sticks so I will be able to learn what was
39. really important.
40. Hashim: Thank you. Appreciated.

On this day, Mary was the discussion leader. Typically, in student-led discussions, when students wanted to express their opinion or give an answer, they would raise their hands. The discussion leaders would then call on various people. The discussion leader would ask questions, elicit answers, and guide the discussion. In the above exchange, Hashim changed the typical pattern of conversation when he directed a question to the discussion leader, Martina (Line: 1). This particular shift in the conversation was followed by another question that Rolanda asked (Line: 9). However, Martina could not answer Rolanda's question and said it should be addressed to an expert, perhaps a doctor. Ahmad joined the conversation in line 18 saying he wanted to answer both questions. He thus positioned himself as knowledgeable. By providing answers to a question that Martina could not answer, Ahmad also assigned himself a more powerful position in the discourse. His answer greatly differed in depth and in the amount of detail given in his explanation. As seen, he produced a long turn. Indeed, after March 15, almost in every class session observed Ahmad was the only student who maintained the floor for the longest period of time after Betsy. This unique participation behavior in the class was realized by Betsy who warned Ahmad several times over the semester as the following excerpt shows:

Excerpt 8
March 17, Wednesday

1. Viresh: What resolutions should be taken to reduce the impact of acid
2. rains?
3. Ahmad: According to me, to reduce the impact of acid rains of uhm on our
4. environment, I think that the government should try to search
5. for new energy sources, because you know we know that the
6. origin of acid rains is the destruction of atmosphere layers and that
7. destruction is due of too much carbon-dioxide in the atmosphere
8. and because we use fuel, energy sources such as fuel, you know
9. gas, and such things a:nd [
10. Betsy: *(Betsy uses her body language - cuts her head with her*
11. *hand. She and class laugh).* [Thank you. All right, I want to hear a
12. good extended answer. Let's hear the question one more time and
13. you try to say it very very clearly.

In this excerpt, Ahmad took a turn to answer Viresh's question. Betsy, feeling that it would take too long for Ahmad to provide a coherent answer, used her body language to signal that Ahmad should end it. She completely denied him the opportunity to speak further by thanking him (Line: 11). Betsy then positioned Ahmad as an unsuccessful participator when she said she wanted to hear a good extended answer that should be stated clearly (Lines: 11-13). A very similar request by Betsy is seen in the following excerpt where Takumi was the discussion leader:

Excerpt 9
March 29, Monday

1. Takumi: Okay, let's summarize. Who can summarize first sentence?

2. *(Ahmad raises his hand.)*

3. Takumi: Okay, Ahmad.
4. Ahmad: For this first question, we had a wide range of opinions. Some
5. participants agree, some disagree. There are some personal
6. opinions something like Martina, she told that, she told us that,
7. there are such things like handouts, leaflets that are distributed in
8. the streets and they are not worth it. There's no point in giving it as

9. that's waste of time and money. And using color [
10. Betsy: *(whispers to Ahmad)* [Summary!
11. Takumi: (*laughs*) Summary.
12. Ahmad: Using color in advertisement [
13. Takumi: (*laughs*) [So, next one. Who can?

Ahmad's role was to summarize the answers given by the class to the first discussion question. Again, Betsy interrupted Ahmad, reminding him that it was supposed to be a summary. Takumi further positioned Ahmad as an incompetent participator by repeating what Betsy said. Despite the two requests, Ahmad continued to speak until Takumi clearly interrupted him (Line: 13) as he attempted to elicit an answer from someone else in class.

Over time, his classmates started to notice Ahmad's problematic participation behavior. There were times when it became quite disruptive, which finally made Betsy address it in class indirectly as the following excerpt shows:

Excerpt 10
March 31, Wednesday

1. Betsy: I need to say two things before we start. One of them has to do
2. with summarizing. All right, what is a summary?
3. Hashim: Brief.
4. Betsy: Brief. There's the key word. A summary is shorter *(Martina and*
5. *Fareed look at Ahmad and smile sarcastically)* than the original
6. thing.

7. *(Hashim looks at Ahmad, points at him and says):*

8. Hashim: This is yours.
9. Betsy: All right. This is for everybody. Some of you have done a good job
10. summarizing. Some of you have been trying to repeat everything.
11. So, summarizing is short. (*Talks more about summarizing*). That
12. was one thing. Another thing is what sport are we supposed to be
13. playing here?
14. Class: Basketball.

15. Betsy: Basketball. Okay, can you keep the ball really a long time?
16. Class: No.
17. Betsy: No. You have to do something and then you need to::
18. Hashim: Pass.
19. Betsy: to
20. Hashim: Pass.
21. Betsy: interchange with team members. This is a pretty big point because
22. you guys come from different cultures. So, different cultures have
23. a different what we call a wait time. (*Talks more about wait time*).
24. All right, I know that Hashim has spent.. How long were you in
25. Britain?
26. Hashim: One year and a half.
27. Betsy: One and a half years. And there from what I know about the
28. British style, the British allow longer turn taking so it's okay to
29. talk quite a long time before changing to another person.
30. Americans have a more impatient style. We are not as patient for
31. someone to talk for a long time before we take turns. So, some of
32. you need to work on saying more. Some of you need to pay
33. attention to yourselves and say less thinking about the American
34. style. […] My point here is that we're practicing. All right? And I
35. don't expect you to be perfect. But I expect you to learn try to
36. learn by the basketball rules. So, I am just emphasizing here we're
37. playing a different cultural sport.

In the excerpt above, Betsy told the class that she wanted to discuss two important things before Chen, who was the discussion leader on that day, started the class discussion. As soon as Betsy started to talk about summarizing, some students automatically looked at Ahmad, implying that Betsy was addressing it to him. Indeed, the assumption was clearly expressed by Hashim who said "This is yours" meaning that Betsy was talking about him. Yet, Betsy rejected this positioning and said it was for everybody in class and further talked about her expectations regarding classroom participation.

In parts I and II above, I presented examples of talk in a multilingual classroom to illustrate how linguistic interactions between teacher and students and between students were used to signal, construct, and resist positional identities. In the last part of this

chapter, I describe the power struggle that took place between Ahmad and Hashim over the semester and show how Hashim became an accepted member of the class while Ahmad was excluded.

Cross-case Analysis: Ahmad and Hashim

Where appropriate, I compared and contrasted Hashim's experiences and positioning with those of Ahmad because there were interesting similarities and differences. Such comparison became more necessary when the power struggle became obvious between the two students. They struggled to have power in class by a) competing to display competence, b) using implicit sarcasm, and c) challenging each other's competence. I discuss each category below.

"We Know the Word, But": Competing to Display Competence

Mercer (1995) states that in almost every class there is a "conversational routine" (p. 18) which happens when teachers ask questions, take up students' responses, and use them to carry the discussion in the direction they want. Everybody knows the conventional ways for talking like a teacher or a student. In the Oral Skills class, "question-answer routines" (Mercer, 1995, p. 18) were always dominated either by Ahmad or Hashim or both as seen in the following example (Excerpt 1). Over the semester, Ahmad and Hashim usually competed to display their competence. The opportunities for other students to make any kind of contribution were severely limited.

The following excerpt was taken from one of those "conversational routines" to illustrate how Ahmad and Hashim competed for turns in their interaction with Betsy:

Excerpt 1

March 15, Monday

1.	Betsy:	Okay, what is air pollution? What is the connection between air
2.		pollution and acid rain?
3.	Ahmad:	Yes, and the pollution is the release of substances like uhm that
4.		contains uhm carbohydrates.
5.	Betsy:	Carbohydrates. Maybe not carbohydrates but carbon dioxides.
6.		*(writes on the board)*
7.	Ahmad:	Carbon dioxides.
8.	Betsy:	Yeah, so the emissions like what causes this release? Where does
9.		the release come from?
10.	Ahmad:	[Industries.
11.	Hashim:	[Factories.
12.	Betsy:	Could be industry. What else?
13.	Ahmad:	Factories.
14.	Betsy:	From?
15.	Hashim:	Cars.
16.	Betsy:	Okay, so [talking about cars, trucks, which is all kinds of motor
17.		[vehicles
18.	Hashim:	[Lots of stuff yeah.
19.	Hashim:	[Trains, airplanes.
20.	Betsy:	What else?
21.	Betsy:	Here we got industry, factory, [
22.	Ahmad:	[They call that (*incomprehensible*)
23.	Betsy:	Pardon?
24.	Ahmad:	They call that all sorts of
25.	Betsy:	Okay, vehicles that use oil and what is oil? It's a in a category. Oil,
26.		[gas,
27.	Hashim:	[etc. etc.
28.	Betsy:	What are these?
29.	Hashim:	Fossil fuels.
30.	Betsy:	Fossil fuels.
31.	Hashim:	Yeah, fossil fuels.
32.	Betsy:	These are that's an important concept. So, fossil fuels are oil, gas,
33.		and
34.	Betsy:	What are fossils?
35.	Hashim:	Fossils. You don't know fossils?
36.	Ahmad:	Something that's very old.
37.	Betsy:	Something really old. Where do you find it?

In this exchange, Betsy wanted students to report on the lecture they had listened to at home. As the interaction progressed, Betsy continued to check students' understanding of

a number of central concepts by eliciting responses and providing feedback on their answers. Betsy's questions and confirmations of the students' answers positioned them as knowledge constructors. When the turn taking is examined, we notice that Hashim and Ahmad were firmly in control of this interaction. Betsy used their contributions, which positioned Ahmad and Hashim as students who did their homework well and recalled the important information. The whole interaction progressed only between three members of the class: Betsy, Hashim, and Ahmad. This interactional competition continued for the rest of the class whenever the students engaged in whole-class discussion with the teacher. The classroom talk progressed only between Ahmad, Hashim, and Betsy, providing almost no opportunities for other students to gain access to or contribute to the conversation. I provide two more examples below just to further illustrate the competition for turn-taking between the two focal participants within the same class session.

Example I
March 15, Monday

Betsy:	Corrode is usually used for metal. Have you seen an old car, abandoned car? And there's rain and sun, rain and sun, and after time, the medal turns brown.
Ahmad:	Rust.
Betsy :	Rust. [It rusts.
Hashim:	[Corrosion.
Betsy:	Corrosion. Yeah.

Example II
March 15, Monday

Betsy:	An example of a natural resource?
Hashim:	Solar system.
Betsy:	Hm?
Hashim:	Solar system.
Betsy:	The solar system is a huge natural resource for the whole world. Another one?
Ahmad:	Wind power.
Betsy:	Wind power.

The power struggle between Ahmad and Hashim was not only related to content knowledge, but also linguistic competence, which is seen in the following conversation

when Betsy was evaluating Rolanda's performance as a discussion leader. While she was giving positive feedback on the participation and contribution of the class, she used the word "compliment" and asked the class what it meant:

Excerpt 2
March 22, Monday

1.	Betsy:	And I also want to compliment you guys. What is a compliment? If
2.		you say, she gave me a compliment.
3.	Ahmad:	Appreciation (*quietly*)
4.	Hashim:	We know the meaning, but
5.	Betsy:	Okay, I just [if I go
6.	Hashim:	Accomplishment stuff like that.
7.	Betsy:	Oh, today actually Rolanda came in and I said "Rolanda, I like
8.		your dress." That was one, that's a compliment. What a nice dress,
9.		or what a good discussion, so a compliment is a form of praise.

After Betsy asked the class what compliment meant, Ahmad said "appreciation" quietly. Although he was able to come up with a definition, his voice indicated some hesitance. Upon Ahmad's answer, Hashim immediately joined the conversation by saying, "We know the meaning, but". The use of "we" here signals a collective positioning. Hashim positioned himself and Ahmad as competent learners as they both knew the meaning. Hashim managed to position himself further as knowledgeable by quickly displaying his familiarity with the word "compliment" and producing a simple definition "accomplishment stuff like that".

The power struggle between the two students to display their competence also appeared when Hashim was the discussion leader:

Excerpt 3
April 12, Monday

1.	Hashim:	I think Ahmad is not agreeing with you. What's your opinion

2. Ahmad?

3. (*Ahmad laughs.)*

4. Ahmad: The thing is that in my home country yes it's not big problem but
5. some crime problems you know such things like rock heads. You
6. know I don't know if you know what rock heads mean.
7. Hashim: Yeah.
8. Ahmad: People like (*incomprehensible*) and crooks become nearby school
9. and ask money from students you know such things like that. If
10. there is no police around you know they can abuse the students and
11. take such things like that.
12. Hashim: Is that clear for you? (*looks around*) I mean who can give us the
13. main idea what Ahmad said? Who can (0.2) Who can summarize
14. what Ahmad said? Takumi go ahead Takumi because this, go
15. ahead and try to explain

16. (*Takumi and class laugh.)*

17. Ahmad: I can explain again. (*Class laughs.)*
18. Hashim: Yes, please.
19. Ahmad: Yes, yes, what I was saying is that in my home country. I don't
20. know you know what (*incomprehensible*) is?
21. Hashim: Give us an example. Here is uhm Viresh.
22. Ahmad: Yes, yes, I mean I am a student right? I am just getting out of the
23. school and just going home and Viresh come by me and he grasps
24. me you know. [
25. Hashim: [Attacked him and took his money his homework and his books
26. and stuff like that.
27. Ahmad: Yes, I get (*incomprehensible*) by Viresh. He asked for my money.
28. He asked for my goods or everything that is beautiful on me.
29. Hashim: [Yeah, let me interrupt you. Thank you. I think that's clear. (*Class*
30. *laughs*). Appreciated. What about you Gui Min?

Before Hashim called on Ahmad, Rolanda had talked about crime in schools in her country and said crime was not a major problem. After Rolanda's answer, Hashim called on Ahmad to hear his opinion, saying that he might disagree with Rolanda although Ahmad had not shown any sign to take a turn. Yet, Ahmad used unfamiliar vocabulary in his answer and consequently asked if the class knew the meaning of "rock heads".

Hashim immediately answered "yeah", thereby positioning himself as being competent as Ahmad. Ahmad felt that he needed to explain the meaning as there was not any response from others. It was very interesting when Hashim checked if they understood what Ahmad said (Line: 12) and asked for a brief summary of what Ahmad had been describing. He called on Takumi, one of the most silent students in class, for an answer. Takumi could not say anything. Before anyone else could answer, Ahmad quickly assumed the leadership role by taking a turn: "I can explain again." Hashim gave him permission to do so. He further commanded him to give an example. He replicated a very teacher-like IRE (Cazden, 2001) discourse pattern of initiation ("Who can summarize what Ahmad said?"), response by Ahmad, and evaluation ("Give us an example"). Cazden states that this type of classroom discourse enables the teacher to control the flow of information. I never observed other students doing this. By engaging in an IRE pattern, Hashim maintained this control. He also took a turn to elaborate for Ahmad in lines 21 and 25. By monitoring Ahmad's responses and building on them, Hashim positioned himself as being competent as Ahmad and placed himself in the leadership position, which gave him more power over Ahmad through the discussion. He interactively positioned Ahmad as one whose response could be elaborated on, while positioning himself as the one to do it. In short, both Hashim and Ahmad positioned themselves as members who were knowledgeable enough to assist others, thereby they became the leaders and owners of knowledge. Keeping the group on track and controlling the conversation enabled Hashim to maintain power. Hashim again engaged in reflexive positioning where, like a teacher, he had the power to direct others' responses. While

explaining the situation, Ahmad and Hashim simultaneously positioned themselves as members who controlled the group's functioning. Again, one of the many ways that Hashim indexed his powerful roles throughout the discussion was to engage in teacher-like behaviors. By eliciting answers, keeping the group on task, and holding other members accountable, he engaged in teacher-like positions and managed to exert power.

Using Implicit Sarcasm

Although the power struggles for displaying competence were clear between Ahmad and Hashim, the struggle was not always that explicit. There were times when the circulation of power was hidden in sarcasm, which I show in the following excerpt:

Excerpt 4
April 21, Wednesday

1.	Betsy:	Okay, Gui Min, could you read twelve?
2.	Gui Min:	She is not agree with that.
3.	Betsy:	Okay, one more time. What are we gonna do?
4.	Ahmad:	[She doesn't agree with that.
5.	Betsy:	[Okay, Chen read it for us.
6.	Chen:	She does not agree with that.
7.	Betsy:	She does not agree with that. Yes, Hashim.
8.	Hashim:	What's the difference between is and does and the meaning? What
9.		does that affect the meaning?
10.	Betsy:	Which?
11.	Hashim:	She is not agree or she doesn't agree. I know the correct grammar
12.		is does but [
13.	Betsy:	[Okay. If you say she is not agree with that, I understand you.
14.	Hashim:	But?
15.	Betsy:	I understand you, but if you're trying to make an impression of
16.		being really in control of English, then I think well he (*referring to*
17.		*Hashim*) made a mistake there (*Ahmad laughs quietly*). It's not a
18.		huge mistake, but if you can learn to control that, your English
19.		sounds more educated. But I mean that's a good point. Everyday
20.		you guys already communicate quite well in English. I mean pad
21.		yourselves on the back. I mean all of you carry on [good

22. conversation in the discussions.
23. Hashim: [Come on. You are kidding of course.
24. Betsy: You're, most of the time, able to communicate your idea, but as
25. you get more and more control of the grammar, you communicate
26. your idea more precisely. Sometimes if you are not using the right
27. grammar, we can come away and go 'wait a minute, does he mean
28. this, does he mean that?' You know I have the general idea, but I
29. am not sure 'did they happen yesterday' or 'did it happen another
30. time?' So, is this a terrible mistake? No. Would it be good to learn
31. it correctly? [Yes.
32. Ahmad: [Yes!
33. Hashim: Thank you.

In this class, students worked with a partner to correct grammar mistakes in a list of sentences. After that, a whole-class question-answer format followed so that they could check their answers. Ahmad corrected the error in the sentence "She is not agree with that.", but his answer was ignored by Betsy who called on Chen to elicit an answer. After Chen corrected the error and Betsy confirmed her answer, Hashim joined the conversation to ask a question about the difference between "is" and "does". While asking the difference, Hashim's effort to save face by saying "I know the correct grammar is does" assigned him the position of a competent student and earned him status. Since the question was posed to Betsy, she was the expected respondent and therefore answered Hashim's question. Ahmad's sarcastic laughter in line 17, right after Betsy said "I think he made a mistake there" repositioned Hashim as someone who was incompetent. Once Betsy's explanation was over, Ahmad's "yes" with an emphasis positioned himself in the role of final authority for what constitutes a correct answer.

In addition to using implicit sarcasm and competing to display their knowledge, there were times when these two students challenged each other's competence, creating conflict. It is this type of negotiation that I explain next.

Challenging Competence

The power struggle between Ahmad and Hashim made itself visible when they took turns frequently to contribute to classroom discourse or laughed at each other's mistakes. They also challenged each other's competence whenever possible. For example, in the following story line, Ahmad and Takumi had just finished their final presentation and were answering the questions together asked by their classmates. Hashim directed his question to Takumi:

Excerpt 4
April 26, Monday

1. Hashim: I've got just one question if I will give you to Takumi specially, if I
2. give you the opportunity to make competition between Hollywood
3. in California and Japan, would you guarantee your winning in this
4. competition or not and why?

5. *(Class laughs.)*

6. Takumi: We can win. Yeah.
7. Hashim: Why, would you give me the reasons?
8. Taskumi: Because we have ability of drawing style and content and we have
9. confidence about it.
10. Hashim: Would you give me some examples? For example, which one is
11. more popular, slum dog or tom jerry for example?

12. *(Class laughs.)*

13. Hashim: Come on (*inaudible*)
14. Betsy: We are laughing with you.
15. Takumi: I think Slum dog is for younger mens, so I showed … 'picture.
16. These three animation got an award in Japan, because this contest

17. is for adults.
18. Ahmad: Yes, can I please answer? I would like to add something about
19. your question. If you want to compare Japanese and American
20. animes like you are saying, we cannot compare something like that
21. concern humor and something like that concerns sports. We have
22. to compare them from the same paradigms like if an anime
23. follows a pattern of sport and other one follow the pattern of
24. humor, we cannot compare them. We have to compare them
25. accordingly.
26. Hashim: Thank you.
27. Ahmad: Yes.

In this story line, Hashim addressed his question to Takumi by asking about the competition between American and Japanese anime. Perhaps Hashim's question was perceived by Ahmad as a move threatening his power as the presenter because Hashim chose Takumi and therefore positioned Takumi as the expert who would be able to answer his question. It was very interesting to see that Ahmad got back into the conversation in order to reassert his authority. He asked for permission to answer, but did not wait for a confirmation, so he created his own opportunity to position himself as someone who was as knowledgeable as Takumi on this matter. He then challenged Hashim, saying that Japanese and American anime were two different areas and they should not be compared to each other. Interestingly enough, Hashim did not question it further and accepted Ahmad's positioning.

Social Positioning

The oral skills class that I observed for this study was a learning community where students built relationships over time. During my data analysis, I constantly tried to understand and review my understanding of the classroom hierarchy, observing where each of the students stood relative to the others. During and following classes, I took

notes about what kinds of participation behavior, capital, or competence marked the social status and positioning of the students in the class.

In a short amount of time, three Asian students (Chen, Gui Min, and JJ) became very good friends. Hashim and Ahmad interacted with them only in teacher-sanctioned conversations. During data collection and ongoing analysis, I always thought about the classroom's social hierarchy and realized how much Ahmad's standing had slipped over the course of the semester, to the point where he was no longer a member of any friendship groups in class. Ahmad had attended this class on the fourth day the class met. He came to class on time, quietly listened to his teacher during her instruction, and completed his assignments, thereby indicating a typical participation behavior. However, around mid-March, he started to illustrate a completely different participation behavior by always assigning powerful positions to himself in class and producing long turns. Over the eight final weeks, I watched as the class pushed Ahmad farther and farther out of the group.

In contrast, despite his similar disturbing participation behavior, Hashim was accepted as a class member. His strategic moves enabled him to gain membership. One of his initial strategic moves was to find a different seat for himself. Hashim began sitting next to Martina who was sitting across from me. By helping Martina in classroom tasks, he was able to exert power over her but also managed to take the position of a "helper". This new physical position in class also helped Hashim interact more with Fareed and Viresh, who were good friends with Martina. Therefore, Hashim was able to join the group. However, what enabled him more to gain membership was his use of humor and

gradual understanding of classroom participation norms, which in a way shaped his classroom behavior.

Hashim's Social Positioning

Students in the oral skills class steadily and positively changed their attitudes toward Hashim. Hashim was constructed as a valued member by contributing unique personal knowledge and experiences and receiving positive feedback from the classroom teacher. Hashim's identity in the peer group shifted from outsider to insider as he built friendships, used humor more, and became less disruptive in class.

Use of humor

In his discussion of power, van Dijk (2008) highlights the importance of cultural differences and states that "the members of different cultures may understand and use discourses in different ways, consistent with their own culturally shared knowledge and attitudes" (p. 17). Using jokes played an important part in Hashim's understanding of classroom discourse. According to him, jokes were important as he said:

Hashim: We usually, I usually for example in classes even in the UK or X, sometimes you just say something just between, just mid of the lecture, just to make some things, jokes, so it will take out the stress of students. We will laugh and then we will continue.

From what Hashim was saying, it seems that jokes were welcomed and appreciated in the educational settings he had been in prior to studying in the U.S. Around mid March, Hashim started to use humor more often as a conversational strategy than he had done before; this way he could still communicate his intentions and have power over others, yet be funny. He monitored the mood of the class (or his own) and lightened it when he

himself or the class atmosphere seemed too serious or heavy. The following illustration exemplifies how Hashim integrated humor successfully while at the same time he assigned a strong position to himself. During this particular day, Chen was the discussion leader. Several students took turns to share their opinions regarding the first discussion question, "Do you think men should help women at home?". Fareed and Ahmad argued that men should work outside whereas women should stay at home, cook, and take care of children. Soon after, Chen called on Hashim to hear his opinion:

Excerpt 5
March 31, Wednesday

1. Chen: How about you Hashim?
2. Hashim: In fact at the beginning, I was just like you guys *(pointing at*
3. *Ahmad and Fareed)*, but after that I traveled and spent time in
4. Italy, Switzerland, and England, so I has changed differently. Now
5. I would be the woman and she would be the man I think.

6. *(Class laughs.)*

7. Hashim: I mean I don't care. I just. (*Class continues to laugh*). Come on. I
8. don't mean that. I mean we can negotiate that in our house. It's not
9. big deal I mean.

In discussing gender roles, Hashim differentiated himself from Fareed and Ahmad by bringing up his symbolic capital, his work and study abroad experience, and therefore establishing his superior intercultural status. He concluded his position with a joke: he could be a woman. The class's laughter in turn provided a contextualization cue: other students appreciated his different position, thus co-constructing his identity at this moment. Within this context, we see Hashim positioning himself in the role of clever communicator who both demonstrated his sense of humor and his own experience and

status. His superior status would not be disturbing because what the class seemed to focus on was his joke.

Especially, female students in the class started to find his comments quite funny as the two following examples show. In both examples, Hashim made the class laugh and warned them not to laugh, which indeed made them laugh more:

Example I
April 5

H: Yeah, in fact I have to think about this situation. Just maybe one month ago, it was a question in the TOEFL IBT. U:::hm, yes I agree the money is more important and why for three reasons. First reason if you'd like to date for your girlfriend or would like to go out, you have to pay for the dinner, you have to rent or have a nice car, and you dress well so all that money,

Girls laughing

H: Yeah, don't laugh.

Girls laugh more.

Example II
April 28

H: As you go up of the pyramid, you see the area is decrease a little bit, okay? And you see here cheese and this one is the meat and just little bit little bit of sweets like oils sweets which contain vitamin B12. So the big amount of our nutrition should contain carbohydrate and then mix between vegetable and fruit and then as you can see this one. So, next time when you go to Walmart or H.E.B. take into consideration all this area. Don't concentrate just this one and macaroni and leave the stuff away.

Class laughs.

H: Don't laugh. This is really big problem.

From his positional identity as an "outspoken student", Hashim took up another positional identity through the end of the semester: "funny classmate". Using humor as a strategy positioned Hashim differently than Ahmad who was also positioned as an "outspoken student" by his classmates. Indeed, in the final interviews, all students I

interviewed explicitly positioned Hashim as a "funny" student and none of them complained about his dominance or interruptions anymore. Here is how Martina described her interactions with Hashim:

Final Interview with Martina
April 26, 2010

Researcher: Tell me about your classmates.

Martina: Okay, I will start with Hashim because he is really really really nice guy. I love a lot working with him. He's really helpful and he always help me with like if I don't have know something, he always help me. We talk like things of the class, but we finish we talk about anything so I know him so. He's really nice person and I enjoy working with him. And he's always like listening very carefully like (0.2) he's really funny.

Martina enjoyed working with Hashim on various classroom tasks as Hashim was helping her with grammar and vocabulary. She enjoyed his company. Similar to Martina, who found Hashim funny, Ahmad also highlighted Hashim's having a strong sense of humor:

Ahmad: Hashim is a good guy. He's really funny. (*laughs*) I like Hashim. First of all, all those Arabic people, we have the same religion. I feel closer. They teach me some words in Arabic. They are funny like me. I like those kind of (0.1) they are relaxed! I like jokes. I like jokes.

Ahmad identified himself with Hashim on various accounts. First, they shared the same religion. Second, Ahmad generalized that Arab students would make jokes like himself. Even Gui Min, who complained about Hashim's participation style and was quite critical of him in the initial interviews, had a completely different idea about Hashim when I interviewed her in April.

Final Interview with Gui Mi
April 29, 2010

Researcher: Okay, what do you think about the boys? For example, Ahmad and Hashim?

Gui Min: Hashim (0.2) (*laughs*). Hashim is funny. He is more funny in the class, presentations or discussion or something. I think he's like getting better than before.

Researcher: What do you mean by that?

Gui Min: Before, he wasn't that funny. Maybe he didn't know people that much, so he sometimes sit alone. But now he involved in everybody.

According to Gui Min, Hashim was able to gain membership in class as he got to know his classmates better and began to form informal relations with them.

Acquiring Classroom Participation Norms

Although Hashim did not use the appropriate participation norms in class, he was able to partially acquire them over time. Therefore, his disturbing participation behavior such as interruptions, started to steadily decrease. The realization he experienced is well described in his own words:

Final interview with Hashim
May 3, 2010

Hashim: I discovered like Betsy said like we ask to play basketball, football, rugby or bowling. So she means that you can't participate until she gave you right. I mean you cannot paraphrase you cannot say anything straight away, I mean that is related to my culture and Mediterranean culture, I mean you can interrupt straight away and say your opinion, but here you have to rise your hand and stuff like that. And I didn't know that.

Researcher: And how did you like it? Did you like it?

Hashim: No, of course. I found it hard, so the best thing I did that I stopped. I didn't speak at all I mean. The best way to do it. Yeah. That's it. This is the right thing.

Researcher: Wow. And how did you notice it? How did you realize that was the norm

here, that it was the rule here for the participation?

Hashim: At the beginning I didn't know. When I came here I asked (*the learning specialist*) about the relation stuff, she didn't say that to me. And then I noticed twice, once like Ahmad, he was participating like he likes to say something. But she really clever, Betsy, she interrupt with friendly way, kindly way. I noticed that.

Researcher: What was the friendly way?

Hashim: She asked we were in a discussion and he is trying to summarize and he spent a long time. I noticed that. So she said, she smiled and said that 'O:h, this is the summary, this is the summary'. So I took that one in mind kept it in mind. The second was when we started our discussions she put three games in there in the blackboard, bowling, basketball or rugby, which one would you like to play? And she mentioned like Spanish and Mediterranean, they can't participate and here is different and stuff like that. So I was wo::w I was making mistake I mean for the first time of the semester.

Researcher: Was that encouraging or discouraging for you?

Hashim: To me? No, discouraging. I have to follow, because I am here, I need to follow the rule here, yes.

Hashim eventually accepted Betsy's role in classroom participation. He learned, for example, that he had to raise his hand to speak in class. This norm was inconsistent with his cultural way of speaking in which interruptions were accepted. Although Hashim did not seem happy at all that he had to adapt to the rules, he acquired them over time.

Ahmad's Social Positioning

Ahmad's isolation increased over time in the oral skills class. I observed him spending break time usually with another student from Cameroon who was taking lower level ESL courses. Around mid March, Ahmad became good friends with Takumi. He sat

next to him and they worked on several classroom tasks together including the final presentation. In his diary, he described his friendships:

Ahmad: Am I getting along well with everybody in class? I'll say no. There some people with whom I don't really talk or I'm not getting on well. I will not cite their names. But, I like some guys like Takumi, Chen, Fareed, Martina, Gui Min. They're all nice and respectful to me so am I. But I like most Takumi. […] Martina and Takumi, even Fareed (a bit) are the ones who are beyond the student-student relationship with me. But Takumi is definitely my friend. About the others, it's very weird. But, some of them get on well with each other. I don't have many friends at the (*Name of the Intensive English Program*) even in Oral Skills class. I can't explain it. Maybe I'm the cause. I don't know. I know I'm funny, nice, cool, respectful, polite and I'm not bragging about that (From Ahmad's diary: 03/2010).

Even though Ahmad included Chen, Fareed, Martina, and Gui Min in his friendship group, I barely saw these students spending time with Ahmad during breaks or in class. Although Ahmad was aware that he did not have many friends and questioned the reason, it seems he did not believe he himself was the reason for his isolation as he was "funny, nice, cool, respectful, polite", which are the features a good friend could possess. He saw himself as he had always seen himself in his life and culture. Now others did not see that in him, so he questioned why. He seemed to be moving away from people because they did not see or know what he saw or knew about himself. He stayed with his other compatriot from the same home country because maybe Ahmad could be who he was in his home country (for his sanity) and was seen as by others in his home country. The social isolation he faced was also evident in the following excerpt Ahmad wrote in his diary at the beginning of the spring break:

Ahmad: Weeh! It's spring break! That's what I heard from many people at (*the name of the ESL program*). They seem to be very happy because they have lots of plans for this little vacation. It's different for me because I don't see what I will do during that week.

A few days later, he wrote:

Ahmad: Spring break! Spring break! Boring, annoying, hassling. […] There's nothing else to do. I just hit my books, listening to NPR (debates about Obama's health care, new politics), watching lots of movies and mangas.

When the spring break was over, Ahmad wrote:

Ahmad: At least! We've come back to class. Good bye spring break time to get back to business. […] It is good to see all my teachers' faces again.

Miller (2007) suggests that the social isolation often faced by ESL students is particularly severe during the school holidays. It was the case for Ahmad, who spent the spring break without seeing any of his friends in the oral skills class. While other students had plans and seemed excited about them, Ahmad, even at the beginning of the break, knew that he was going to be alone. The words that he used "boring, annoying, hassling" were significant in terms of showing his social isolation during the break. He appeared to be relieved to get back to school after the spring break, noting in his diary that it was good to see his "teachers".

Hashim as a role model

Although Hashim was able to build friendships with a few students in class, Ahmad became an outcast over time. What made him an outcast was his reflexive positioning and participation behavior. Ahmad's participation and positioning were not disruptive at the beginning of the semester. As the days went on, Ahmad became more articulate and dominant during classroom events, especially in the whole-class discussions led by students. One possible reason for the change in his participation pattern was Hashim. Since Betsy usually welcomed and encouraged Hashim's

contributions, Ahmad perceived Hashim as a good student example. Indeed, in the final interview, he said:

Ahmad: I like the way Hashim expresses himself. He is always confident. He has something natural to catch people's attention. Maybe it's a gift he has. He's gifted with that. He is gifted with that. Me, you know I know many jokes, but I don't like saying jokes in class. Because in class, you have to be serious. And I am a guy who don't know when to stop so I had better not start saying jokes. (*Laughs*.)

In the initial weeks of the semester, it seems that Ahmad carefully mirrored the actions of Hashim, such as Hashim's expression of himself, gaining the teacher's attention, and his contributions that were accepted, confirmed, and even valued by Betsy. Ahmad seemed to learn how to be a student in this class by observing Hashim, who had developed a unique participation behavior. Ahmad therefore positioned Hashim as a "gifted" student and a successful "communicator". As he continued to observe Hashim's classroom participation, he himself experienced significant personal transformation as a student in class. He increasingly contributed to class discussions and gradually gained more confidence. Ahmad was aware that jokes contributed positively to Hashim's identity negotiation in class and positioned himself in a similar way saying "You know I know many jokes". He therefore identified himself with Hashim in many respects. Similar to Hashim, Ahmad started to take turns frequently in class. In sum, analyzing Ahmad's perspectives indicated that Hashim's participation behavior influenced Ahmad's classroom participation as well as negotiation of competence and identity.

Yet, over time, Hashim was able to learn and internalize participation norms in class. At that point, he had already established the identity he wanted, so he was safe. When Ahmad was copying Hashim, Betsy had almost stopped focusing on Hashim. It

was very interesting to observe how things flipped but worked against Ahmad. Ahmad had started out quiet and observant initially. In a way, similar to what happened in the story he narrated, he tested the waters, but then jumped in and everyone else left the pool because of the big splash.

Being arrogant in the competition

Students in the Oral Skills were aware of Ahmad's unique participation behavior. Indeed, all the students I interviewed at the end of the semester complained about Ahmad's use of excessive talk to exert power and influence others in class. They positioned him as someone who was inconsiderate and showed off with his linguistic abilities. Even early in the semester, Chen had noticed Ahmad's emerging talkativeness and dominance in class and signaled his possible exclusion out of the classroom membership when she was describing an ideal language learner to me:

First interview with Gui Min
February 26, 2010

Gui Min: Have good personality and the people will like talk with you and you have more chance to talk with people. If nobody talk with you, cannot talk with mirror. Also, good oral skills, good pronounce. Yeah, nobody want to learn the wrong way. Everybody want to learn the right way. Uhmm (0.3) and the love to help the people. Modest. Even if you good personality, good pronounce, good English skills, always like this, nobody wanna talk.

Researcher: Is everybody modest in your oral skills class?

Gui Min: Ahmad a little. Hashim. Uhmm, top three. Hashim, Ahmad, and the one more person I forgot. Three people lo:::ve talking.

Researcher: Boy or girl?

Gui Min: I think a girl. I forgot.

Researcher: Rolanda?

Gui Min: No, no, not Rolanda. Rolanda is so cute. Not in that class.

Researcher: Oh, I see.

Gui Min: Top three of (*name of the IEP*), really really talk too much. I think you can talk but you should worry about other people. It's important. Everybody does want to improve their English. Everybody does. That's why we're here, right? Sometimes you talk about maybe you have a new idea you wanna share about (0.2) share with us. It's good. Nobody interrupt you, but same time, same thing, just think about other people. When you give the idea to us, you should make it shorter because you use the time that everybody share.

Researcher: Do you think it's because of their culture or?

Gui Min: Ahmad show off but Hashim is not. But I think they are males but other males not that much talk as they do. Maybe culture because maybe in their culture the position of male is higher than female. But I mean here it's America. It's not Saudi Arabia. It rains here it's not dessert (laugh) you should fit this culture. If you don't fit, nobody care you. It's really you should be really really careful with international people.

Gui Min was describing both Hashim and Ahmad. At that time of the semester, Gui Min noticed that both students portrayed problematic participation behavior. Her final statements, "If you don't fit, nobody care you", indicated the possible consequences of Ahmad's and Hashim's behaviors. Being a powerful member of the Asian group in class, Gui Min and her group excluded Ahmad eventually as he did not "fit in" whereas Hashim did.

Through the end of the semester Ahmad's exclusion became more visible and almost everybody I interviewed complained about his participation. Gui Min, for example, described how she felt uncomfortable in working with Ahmad:

Final interview with Gui Min

April 29, 2010

Gui Min: Ahmad. Hmmmm. I don't know how to explain that. I don't know him that much. I don't really like that kind of person. I know win a game or win something or get good score. Uhm, no. For game, maybe win the game is important. But most important thing is doing the game. The practice or participate. He's like (0.1) for him, win is the most important. He just wanna win. Maybe talk a lot in discussions. Sometimes, people have to let him stop.

Researcher: Did you ever stop him in class?

Gui Min: Sometimes, yeah, if we're partners.

Researcher: How did that happen?

Gui Min: We were partners in grammar class and he likes to do everything. Yeah, it's funny. He has an appointment this afternoon, but three o-clock and he told the teacher that he have to leave by 2:45. And at the end of the class, we were playing a game, also counting points. And he just waited the last one. Waited till 2:55 or something. Just wanna win. One more point! And the teacher "Ahmad maybe you should go." And he waited the last one. Yeah! So different. I don't know how to explain this kind of person.

Researcher: Do you like to be in the same group with him in the oral skills?

Gui Min: Not really.

Gui Min: I'd rather work with the people who are closer to me. It's more comfortable.

Gui Min described Ahmad as someone who viewed the classroom environment as competition. In the event she narrated, Ahmad was going to leave his grammar class earlier in order to go to his doctor's appointment. However, they were playing a game in their grammar class that day and he waited until the last minute to gain one more point and win the game. Gui Min, who considered the game an opportunity to practice and participate, did not value Ahmad's passion to win. She explicitly stated her lack of desire

to work with him. By saying, "I'd rather work with the people who are closer to me", she positioned Ahmad as a classmate who was not close to her and excluded him from her friendship circle. Similar thoughts about Ahmad and his desire for competition are seen in Rolanda's words:

Final Interview with Rolanda
April 29, 2010

Researcher: How about your classmates in the oral skills?

Rolanda: Uhmm, Ahmad! Ahmad is I don't know how to say that. He likes to talk a lot. Sometimes, we feel like please shut up. But he's a good guy. But he likes to show off like "I'm here. Don't forget me!" and Hashim (*laughs*), he likes to make jokes and for Betsy it's like normal and for us. He likes to say "Oh, I'm sorry I'm sorry". He's very good and he's a classmate that can help you when you have any trouble or problem.

Rolanda expressed her dissatisfaction with Ahmad's dominant participation behavior in class. She also interpreted Ahmad's contributions as showing off. Interestingly enough, Rolanda then started to talk about Hashim and positioned him as a funny classmate who helped his friends in class. Because Hashim couched his interruptions and speech in apologies, he came across as self-deprecating while Ahmad did not see the need to apologize, so he was seen as arrogant.

Indeed, as Gui Min and Rolanda claimed, Ahmad perceived the classroom environment as a place to compete with others:

Final interview with Ahmad
April 28, 2010

Ahmad: Among those girls, the one I am closest to is Chen. Yeah. That sounds strange? Because you know Rolanda because we are from the same continent, we understand; we almost share the same culture. But there's

something really strange. I don't talk much with Rolanda. I don't know why. There is not a good contact between us. […] Every time I try to talk with her, because I'm kind of person when I talk with someone, when I ask a question, […] when I ask 'how are you doing Rolanda, how was your weekend?', and I pay some attention. I expect more. Maybe she says 'interesting'. Tell me how it was interesting! One time, two times, three times. Oh, that's not gonna work. But Chen. I like her because she's cool. Martina, at the beginning, we were close. We used to talk, but these days she is uhm how to say, distance (0.3) stepping back.

Researcher: When there's group work, who would you like to work with?

Ahmad: Takumi, Fareed, Hashim, Chen. Chen maybe has the same position with Takumi. I like working with her. I think she is one of my (0.1) how to say like you know when there's a competition, how do we call people who compete against each other?

Researcher: Rivals?

Ahmad: She's like a rival for me! That's why I'm really appreciative. Every time she got a good grade than me argghhh! Yes, yes! Those are the students I really focus on Takumi, Chen. Very competitive because they are kind of help me improve myself. I just look at them "wow, they got a good grade. How did he do?"

His exclusion from the classroom membership is seen in Ahmad's own description of his relations with others in class. Ahmad thought that since he and Rolanda shared a similar culture, they should get along well. He positioned himself as a social person who cared about his friends when he wanted to chat with Rolanda by asking about her weekend. However, Rolanda's short answers, such as 'interesting', indicated her lack of desire to communicate with Ahmad. Ahmad mentioned that this was not a one time event, but occurred several times, which made him give up trying to build a friendship with Rolanda. Similarly, Ahmad was aware that Martina also distanced herself from him. Unlike Rolanda and Martina, Chen was positioned differently by Ahmad. He described her as a close friend. It is important to note here that their being close friends was not

social, but class related. It means Chen was a good friend for Ahmad because they were "rivals" in class. Ahmad explicitly stated that he was in competition with other students.

Like Rolanda and Gui Min, Martina also described her poor relations with Ahmad in the oral skills and her negative thoughts:

Final Interview with Martina
April 26, 2010

Martina: With Ahmad now, at the end, it's just like I don't like working with him anymore. But, just because like today in the presentation, there were Takumi and Ahmad and when Takumi talks, Ahmad then add things and that made Takumi do worst. But it's not because of Takumi. Just because of Ahmad. That's trying to improve or I don't know. But I think that in our presentation that I don't think that it's a good idea to add things that another one already said. I don't know, maybe his culture or (0.1) it's okay, but he's always like giving long answers, he just get boring. And because in other classes like I am taking, they are not going to listen at him. They are just ignore him and start talking about everything. It's like uncomfortable to stop. He's a nice person but he's trying to be better than the other ones, so that's not good. Well, today in the presentation, it was really notable that he did because like when Takumi said something and he say really good things and Ahmad add things to that so and he did the same it's not like he was adding things that anybody was listening.

Researcher: So, do you like working with him in class at all?

Martina: At the beginning, it was okay, because he didn't talk too much at the beginning I think. I think that he has more confidence nowadays so (*laughs*) or I don't know why. Maybe he feels more comfortable with the classmates and maybe that's why he's talking more than before. I guess. I don't know.

Researcher: When you are in the same group with him, is he always the one talking?

Martina: Well, when we work like both, I don't know in group because I don't think that we work in group, but when we have to talk, like the both of us, I have my notes and he has his notes and he speaks speaks speaks speaks speaks speaks and time's over so. Okay, bye. (*laughs*) It doesn't matter to me. I don't want to say all my notes because they're like I have really write them so I know what they say. But it's just like maybe he need to be

more quiet sometimes and listen to other people. Because maybe other people have ideas, too, and they want to (o.3)

Researcher: Share?

Martina: Yeah, share their ideas.

Ahmad's transition from an "okay" classmate to "arrogant" student is seen in Martina's description of Ahmad's participation. Martina talked about Ahmad and Takumi's final presentation. Indeed, during the presentation, Ahmad took frequent turns to repeat what Takumi said or he shared his own opinion. Although, like Rolanda, Martina positioned Ahmad as a "good person", she criticized his competitive nature by saying "he's trying to be better than the other ones, so that's not good".

Even the classroom teacher, Betsy, had noticed the positions assigned to Ahmad by his classmates. In the final interview she said:

Final interview with Betsy

Researcher: Other students talked a lot about him (*referring to Ahmad*) in the interviews.

Betsy: Well, he says he's the star (*laughs*). I think he comes across as arrogant. Hashim also has the ability to really speak a lot, but he was either more too attuned to not showing off as much or just wasn't interested in that. And you know we've talked about the class. They became obviously quite fond of him and I think he interacted better and better with them. But Ahmad is just pretty full of himself. He (*referring to Hashim*) also managed to whether by accident or design to project a little humble attitude. I mean Ahmad of course never projects a humble attitude.

Like her students, Betsy also positioned Ahmad as a student who would not project a humble attitude. She compared Ahmad to Hashim several times to point out how Hashim had become a member of the class whereas Ahmad could not.

Students' interactive positionings of Ahmad as arrogant student who favored competition were negatively reflected in their interactions with him. For example, in one pair work with Ahmad, Martina clearly indicated her unwillingness to work with him, which I show in the following excerpt. In this class session, students were going to review their notes they took at home after listening to a lecture. Betsy formed pairs. Ahmad told Betsy that he did not have a partner. Betsy asked Martina to work with Ahmad. Martina moved from one side of the class to another to sit next to him. Here is how the conversation between the two developed:

Excerpt 8
March 31, Wednesday

1.	Ahmad:	There was a part of the lecture that I didn't understand. I think it
2.		was the end and I just left a blank there. Because one of the
3.		women, I don't remember her name.
4.	Martina:	Brian and Lauren.
5.	Ahmad:	I think she was talking about Japanese company which started in
6.		USA. Did you remember that part?
7.	Martina:	Yeah.
8.	Ahmad:	I didn't really understand, so I don't figure out how to write it
9.		down.
10.	Martina:	I think she was studying about American management.
11.	Ahmad:	Yes. They are encouraging the doing initiative and they separate
12.		people who is moving from those who aren't. Oh, then she told the
13.		four steps.
14.	Ahmad:	Yes, I think that was about invasion of Japanese products.
15.	Martina:	American business?
16.	Ahmad:	Yeah, American business. I think he was saying that American
17.		business needs four steps to improve their business something like
18.		that. Did you write them down? Yeah, life time in contrast non
19.		specializing (reads more from his notes 0.6) Do you have the same
20.		thing? (*Looks at Martina's notes*.)
21.	Martina:	Yes.
22.	Ahmad:	And then [
23.	Martina:	[Then she said three things. Advertisement and decision making.
24.	Ahmad:	That was about after women talked about. After that there was a

25. man talking. Who was that?
26. Martina: Brian.
27. Ahmad: Brian, okay. I thought he was the journalist.
28. Martina: No. They were two people talking.
29. Ahmad: So, he was the American expert. Brian, talking explaining
30.
31. *(Martina & Ahmad - overlapping talk.)*

32. Ahmad: What was the last part when she was talking
33. about(incomprehensible). Do you remember that part?

34. *(Ahmad attempts to look at Martina's notes. Martina takes them back.)*

35. Ahmad: Just before the journalist talked about short break and after that
36. opened up the audience. Before that short break, the woman
37. started talking. What was she talking about? Do you remember
38. that part?
39. Martina: *(Nods to mean no.)* I don't know what you are talking about.
40. Ahmad: But, I think that it was really important you know. It was about
41. Japanese companies started in the America. I think that it will be
42. really interesting to have information about because during the test
43. a question might come up.

44. *(No response from Martina. Martina keeps looking at her own notes. It seems she*
45. *has stopped communicating with Ahmad.)*

46. Ahmad: Yeah, thank you. It was very interesting to share our ideas.
47. Betsy: Okay, everybody put your notes where you cannot see them.
48. Martina you are welcome to go back to your chair or stay there. Either one.

49. *(Martina leaves.)*

In this example, Ahmad shared what he thought was significant in the lecture by asking questions to Martina and repeating Martina's responses throughout the conversation. However, Martina did not seem to be genuinely interested in the conversation as she barely made eye-contact with Ahmad and almost never asked him questions. In contrast, Ahmad tried to involve Martina in the conversation by asking her

questions to construct knowledge together. At least five times during the conversation, he checked with Martina to see if she remembered particular parts of the dialogue. Perhaps to show Martina that he was truly interested in what she wrote, he tried look at Martina's notes (Lines: 20, 34). Even at one point, he tried to physically take Martina's notebook away from her. Martina immediately grabbed her notebook back, which indicated her unwillingness to share her notes with Ahmad. Once the time was over, Betsy told Martina that she could either stay where she was sitting or go back to her seat. Martina immediately chose to leave.

In this conversation, Ahmad successfully managed and maintained power in the discourse. He did not silence or marginalize Martina. In contrast, he provided several opportunities for her to share her notes or answers. For example, he started the conversation saying he did not understand one part and asked Martina if she remembered that. When Martina provided a short response "yeah" (Line: 7), Ahmad requested more information from Martina (Line: 8). This way, Ahmad positioned himself as a partner who was collaborating successfully. However, when the rest of the conversation is critically examined, it is easy to notice that Ahmad strategically maintained power. He began the conversation by reflexively positioning himself as a student who could not fully comprehend the dialogue. He therefore provided the floor for Martina to answer the question. Yet, as soon as Martina started to provide an answer in line 10 "I think she was studying about American management", Ahmad continued to supplement her answer for the question which he had acknowledged at the beginning that "he did not understand". Obviously, he was asking questions to which he already knew the answers. While Ahmad

seemed to provide space for Martina, he did not allow her to fully empower herself. He interactively positioned Martina without access to discursive power, which he himself strategically controlled. Martina's resistance to Ahmad's competent student position in the dialogue included withdrawing almost completely from the discussion through the end. Her body language also indicated her lack of desire to communicate with Ahmad as seen in Figure 3. She made almost no eye-contact with Ahmad, which was very atypical of Martina's communication style. Her typical posture while communicating with other students in class can be seen in Figures 4 and 5 below.

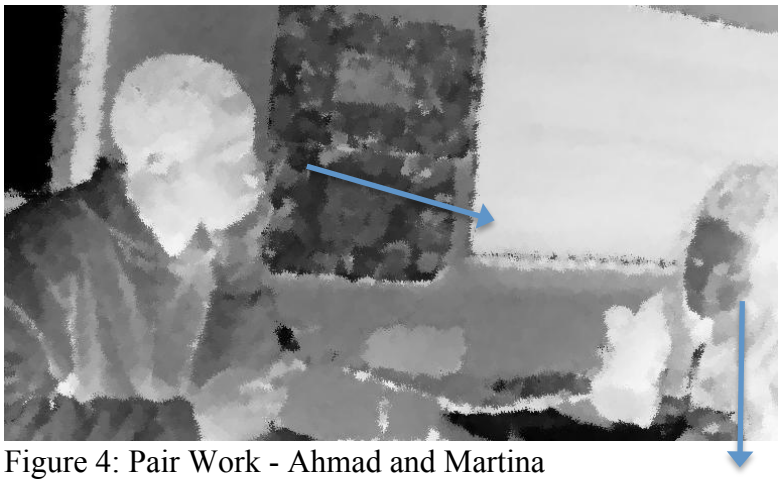


Figure 4: Pair Work - Ahmad and Martina

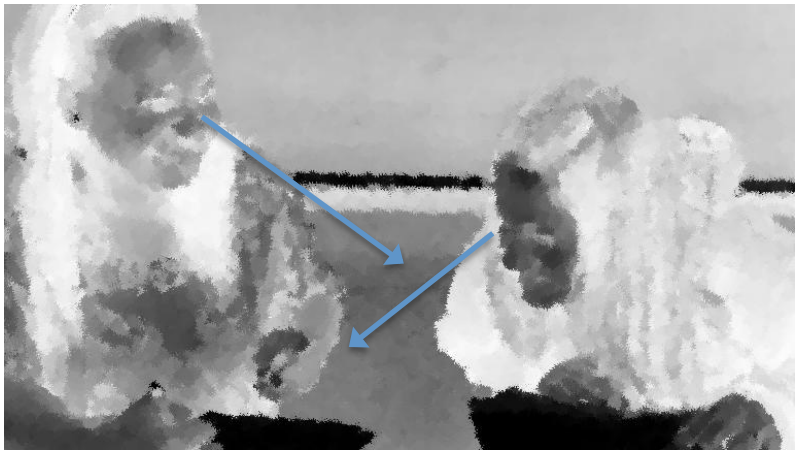


Figure 5: Pair Work - Rolanda and Martina

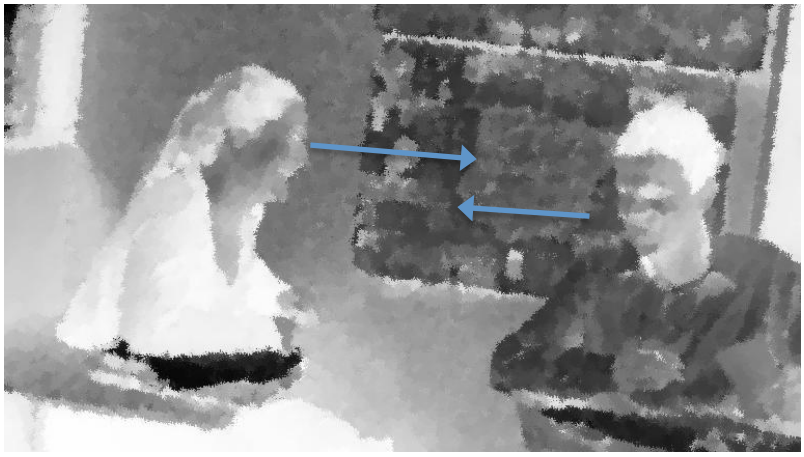


Figure 6: Pair Work: Hashim and Martina

In the final interview with Ahmad, I asked him to reflect on this experience:

Final Interview with Ahmad
April 28, 2010

Ahmad: Well, I'm impressed. First thing I will say is that I congratulate myself. (*laughs*) You know I was amazed with my speaking skills.

Researcher: What do you think about her participation?

Ahmad: Yeah, there were some places she helped me. There was a part that she really did not understand what I was talking about. I think she missed that information. She missed that information. Actually, I got A+ on that, on that lecture. And that (*referring to that part Martina did not know*) helped me in the bonus part.

Researcher: Do you think that she was engaged?

Ahmad: Not really.

Researcher: Why?

Ahmad: That's why I just talked about. You know I am someone who is really perceptive. I notice details. She was just like a question-answer. 'Did you do this?' 'Yes.' And She stays quite. Because I was (0.2) I did everything, you know! Body gesture, facial expression, participation. I think I did everything. But she was like not really involved in the discussion, but I don't really care. Because my main purpose was to do what the teacher asked to do.

19. I did that. I am really proud of myself. I am here to see if I behave
20. in the way the teacher expects me to do.

Ahmad began his reflection by positioning himself as a student who performed well in the conversation with Martina. He reflexively positioned himself as a competent student who had amazing speaking skills. Ahmad did not position Martina in the same way. Although Martina helped him in some places, by missing the information Ahmad pointed out as important, she was interactively positioned as a less competent student by Ahmad. Her failure enabled Ahmad to take up another strong position as an accomplished student as he got an A+ on that particular section. According to Ahmad, he had nothing to do with Martina's lack of participation in this particular activity, because he had done everything he could possibly do including "body gesture, facial expression, participation". This way, Ahmad further positioned himself as a successful collaborator and legitimate participant while positioned Martina as a student who was not engaged. Ahmad's final words evaluating his participation seemed to reflect his aim of presenting himself to the teacher as good student.

More on Hashim's Participation and Positioning

Hashim portrayed a powerful self in the oral skills class while interacting with his teacher and classmates. Although it is not fully possible to explain why he participated or behaved in the ways I described, I will provide some possible interpretations.

Non-powerful identities outside the classroom

Hashim's reflexive positioning as someone who was powerful or in authority in class, similar to positional identities a teacher might have in traditional classrooms (Mercer, 1995), might be related to Hashim's identity negotiation outside the classroom.

Hashim was struggling to position himself in the new culture. Outside the classroom, he felt different because of his culture and faith, which made his "fitting in" difficult. In his diary, he wrote:

> Hashim: Because I am Muslim in my religion, so my culture is different such as am not allowed to go to dancing and drinking places so when I cannot go with my roommates and friends and sharing them what are they doing, that will limit me. They (*his friends*) found it little bit peculiar, e.g., I went with friend to café. When they ordered drink, I said no. They saw me as crap & naïve. (February 2010)

Hashim related his difference to his religion, Islam. Since he was not allowed to drink alcohol, he could not go to bars or clubs. As he said, religious differences, in a way, alienated him from his friends and limited his actions. By his final statement, "They saw me as crap and naïve", Hashim positioned himself as an outsider. When he was asked to write about the differences between the American way of life and the way of life in his home country, Hashim wrote similar things:

> Hashim: Because I am Muslim, there is big difference. I am not allowed to go out with girls; or go out and drink with my friend or even to dance. (February 2010)

Obviously, "the big difference" Hashim frequently mentioned made his cultural adjustment difficult outside the class. His need or desire to have a better social position in this culture was evident in his description of an ideal English language course:

> Hashim: At the beginning, the best thing to do is to involve the students with the society, then, to adapt student with school, university, then with English.

While an outstanding, accomplished engineer in his home country, Hashim came to the United States where he had to adapt to the new culture, but also tried to maintain the power and status he had before. His identity negotiation was not easy. What made his

struggle more complex was his limited networking in the new culture. Hashim had almost no friends outside the IEP and perceived himself as someone who was not accepted easily. His identity negotiation seemed to be more difficult outside where he lacked power. Perhaps, the classroom setting was an opportunity for Hashim to regain power and status. The lack of membership and power outside might have resulted in his dominance in class.

Hashim's academic goals

Hashim's need to display his competence whenever possible might also be due to his background. Hashim came from a working class family who moved to a city from a small town so that Hashim and his siblings could go to school and have an education. All of Hashim's siblings attended and succeeded in college and Hashim also wanted to achieve academically:

> Hashim: We grew up in the farm and then we moved to city just to continue our education. All my family members are educated. This is for the girls and brothers. The minimum they got masters degree. Some of them is doctors and some of them is even professors. My father and mother don't have education. They are illiterate. I mean they don't have any education. But they devoted their life to teach me higher level they could and they did really. Specially because I am the youngest, I really got my plan ready to prepare for my family. My brothers and sisters (0.3) because they got PhDs or masters so I have to follow the same path, I mean, to keep the name of the family up. (Final Interview with Hashim; May 3, 2010)

Bacause Hashim wanted to be a good student, "to keep the name of the family up", he wanted to take every opportunity to speak up and share his knowledge in the oral skills class to succeed. Hashim was aware that his parents, despite being illiterate themselves, had made huge sacrifices to send their children to school. Hashim watched his siblings receive their college degrees and achieve academically. One of his brothers studied at a

prestigious university in the United Kingdom and became a college professor. His siblings became role-models for Hashim and they guided him in his education. As Hashim grew up, it seems that he understood what expectations were in his family regarding education and he began to internalize them.

Without any doubt, most of Hashim's classmates in the oral skills class did not share similar, strong academic goals. For most of them, during this study abroad experience, "having fun" was as important as doing class-related work. Indeed, when I asked Betsy to characterize her oral skills class, she said:

> Betsy: This class strikes me as a little bit immature. I am saying it collectively. My feeling (0.2) Immature (0.1) that sounds negative. Just a little bit younger. I've got Mindy who has her own agenda. She doesn't really know where she is going. She is here in a real social kind of way. Her own style is really not what I want this class to be. Lots of times when you have students who really aren't academically focused, they're here for other purposes. They're quite likely to miss the first class after spring break. You never know. It'd be totally possible for Mindy not to come that day. And who knows who else. (First Interview with Betsy: February 22, 2010)

Indeed, after several weeks in the semester, Mindy never showed up for months. Throughout the semester, she was present in class only for three or four weeks. While positioning Mindy as a student not academically focused, Betsy positioned Fareed and Martina in similar ways. Fareed would always come to class late from breaks as he would socialize with his Arab friends in the hallway. Martina left class 15 to 20 minutes early every week for tennis practice. For the Asian students in the class, partying was very important. Indeed, in her diary, Gui Min always wrote pages about parties she attended. Even Rolanda, whom Betsy positioned as a "solid" student, was quite a popular figure at those parties organized mostly by the Arab students in the IEP. It does not mean that

these students did not care at all about the ESL courses they were taking, but it is obvious that the course-work was not their only priority. Their lack of academic focus might have provided Hashim with the foundation to establish the successful student identity he wanted. This "immature class" (First and final interviews with Betsy) was perhaps a great opportunity for Hashim to accomplish his academic goals. Hashim wanted to succeed academically and he knew that participation was an important indication of success in this class, which was indeed emphasized by Betsy several times during the semester. It is therefore possible that his passion and his classmates' lack of academic focus might have provided him with opportunities to participate more frequently than other students in classroom activities.

Conflicting messages from the teacher

Another possible reason for Hashim's problematic behavior might be the conflicting feedback that he received on his participation from the classroom teacher, Betsy. Interestingly enough, although Hashim spoke out-of-turn and did limit access for other students to learning opportunities in class, he was almost never reprimanded, especially before mid-semester. Answering directly to his questions or asking the class to reflect on or pay attention to Hashim's questions or comments, Betsy actually allowed Hashim to have "powerful floor rights" (Vann, Richardon-Bruna, & Escudero, 2006, p. 208). During the first four-eight weeks of class, Hashim's positioning as a good language learner was co-constructed through Betsy's confirmation of his responses, and the way Betsy and the students made space in the classroom talk for him to display his knowledge

of English. Throughout February and until mid-March, his turns were accepted, even welcomed, as illustrated in Excerpt 6:

Excerpt 6
February 1, 2010

1. Hashim: How about your weekend? Come on. Is that a secret?
2. Betsy: (*Laughing*) He.. he is interested [
3. Hashim: If you don't mind.
4. Betsy: I don't mind [at all *(Betsy laughs.)*
5. Hashim: [If you don't mind. If you wanna keep a secret so that's it.

6. (*Class laughs*)

7. Betsy: It's uhmm let me let me tell you an idiom. Here's a little idiom or
8. proverb.
9. Hashim: Yeah
10. Betsy: And we call it turn about is fair play. *(writes on the board*) and that
11. means I ask you to talk about your weekend and Hashim said "how
12. about you?", so here's turn about. All right, turn about is fair play.
13. Hashim: Yeah, I think so.
14. Betsy: So, here we're saying I asked you, so it's fair. It's not breaking the
15. rules for you to ask me, so it's your turn. Well, let me think, so say
16. this with me "turn about is fair play"
17. Class: Turn about is fair play *(they repeat once more)*
18. Betsy: All right, you asked me, so it's fair for me to ask you. Uhmm, well
19. let's see. Friday (0.3) Can I even remember Friday? You know
20. Friday I worked around my house… *(explains what she did during*
21. *the weekend.)*
22. […]

23. Betsy:… …and on Saturday
24. Hashim: just try to remember.
25. Betsy: I just walked. [I did some cooking
26. Hashim: [No jogging? No?
27. Betsy: No jogging. No, not right now. Fast walking.
28. Hashim: Yeah, for how long time, for how long distance? Please.
29. Betsy: Distance?
30. Hashim: Yeah.
31. Betsy: I usually go about three miles.
32. Hashim: In kilometers?
33. Takumi: Five kilometer, about five kilometer.
34. Hashim: [Wow.

35. Betsy: [Five kilometers. Yeah, yeah.
36. Hashim: That's good.
37. Betsy: Yeah, surprising right?
38. Hashim: Yeah.
39. Betsy: Old person like me.

40. *Class laughs.*
41. Hashim: Yeah, that's good, no no that's good your health ha? [Just to to do
42. Betsy: [It is good for my health, yeah no I totally agree. And then took a
43. walk and in the afternoon, I worked on the *(talks about other*
44. *things she did for about 14 seconds)*
45. Hashim: Come on, why are you hiding all that from us? Come on. Why are
46. you hiding all that?
47. Betsy: Thank you for asking.
48. Hashim: Okay, you're welcome.
49. Betsy: (*laughing*) Thank you for asking. All right, let me hear one or
50. things that you heard from your partner.

Before this conversation took place, Betsy had asked class about their weekend as a warm-up activity. Several students provided brief answers. Then, Hashim interrupted Betsy and asked about "her" weekend. Betsy, quite surprised, agreed to answer Hashim's question and even took the opportunity to teach a new idiom. Hashim's interruption actually ended with a learning opportunity for everybody. For the rest of the conversation, Hashim frequently interrupted Betsy to elicit answers, which Betsy did. At the end, she thanked Hashim for asking about her weekend. There were many similar instances, mostly at the beginning of the semester, when Betsy recognized Hashim's voluntary contributions as valid and used them to add to the content of the discussion, thus building knowledge (Black, 2004). Had Betsy's response to Hashim been different in the above exchange – for example, "Hashim, we are running out of time; we should move on", Hashim's questions perhaps would have been framed differently (Bloome, et. al, 2008). It is important to note that none of Hashim's remarks that interrupted the

pattern of classroom conversation were explicitly labeled as off-topic by Betsy during any time in the semester.

On the other hand, there were times when Betsy seemed uncomfortable by Hashim's assertions and repositioned him. Yet even in those times, the message that she tried to get across seemed to be quite confusing for Hashim. For example, one day, Betsy wrote several sentences on the board, formed pairs, and asked her students to read the sentences aloud in pairs. One of the sentences included the word 'separate' both as an adjective and a verb. Other sentence had 'graduate' as an adjective and a verb. After students read the sentences aloud in pairs, Betsy asked them what the common element in the sentences was. Students noticed the difference in the grammatical functions of the words. That is, they noticed that the same word could function both as an adjective and also a verb in the same sentence. Betsy told them that there was one more important difference, which was the pronunciation. She pointed out the difference by reading those sentences aloud again and emphasizing the words 'separate' and 'graduate' both as adjectives and verbs and asked students to repeat after her. She then called on several students so that each student had a chance to practice pronunciation. When she was almost ready to finish and move on to the next activity, Hashim unexpectedly interrupted her:

1. Hashim: Teacher, just a quick question.
2. Betsy: All right.
3. Hashim: You know, who told you this intonation?
4. Betsy: Who told me this?
5. *(Class laughs.)*
6. Hashim: How do you guess to…?

7. *(*Betsy *waves at the camera. She smiles, but I can see her frustration.)*
8. Hashim: Sorry, if I asked the wrong question.
9. Betsy: Doesn't matter. It's just that I'm surprised that you asked that.
10. Hashim: I mean how did you know that?
11. Betsy: How do I know that?
12. Betsy: By growing up in this culture [and speaking that language all my
13. life.
14. Hashim: [Oh, okay.
15. Betsy: Yeah, but, it follows a pattern. It follows a pattern. And, it, uhmm,
16. I told you about it, near the beginning of the course. We were
17. working with the word 'indiscriminately'.

As the excerpt shows, Hashim interrupted Betsy to ask a question. Betsy allowed him to take the floor, saying "all right," and Hashim asked his question, "Who told you this intonation?" By this question, it seemed as if he meant to ask something like, 'What is the rule for this pronunciation difference?' or 'How can we notice this next time when we see a different pair?'. However, his question initially functioned in a different way in the discourse. In line 4 Betsy repeated his question in a surprised way and in the same form ("Who told me this intonation?"). Seeming to recognize there was a miscommunication, Hashim immediately rephrased his question in line 6 "How do you guess to…". By doing this, he positioned himself as a legitimate student in class as he tried to demonstrate that the question he was trying to ask was indeed a good question that deserved an answer. However, he was unable to complete his question as the class laughed and the teacher turned back and waved at the camera, which all made Hashim become more aware that his question was somewhat problematic. He therefore took a step back and apologized saying, "Sorry, if I asked the wrong question". Betsy's wave and the laughter in the class assigned a position to Hassan and he took up that position, the owner of the weird question, by apologizing. Betsy added that she was surprised by the question, which

further supported the weak position assigned to Hashim. After this explicit acknowledgement, Hashim resisted this position, and tried to reposition himself by rewording the question. He seemed to insist on the quality of his question and his legitimate position, which was in fact finally accepted by Betsy who provided an answer (line 12). Yet, her explanation indicated her native-speaker superiority and the power which came with it (line 12). Hashim, relieved that his strong position was accepted by the teacher, simply accepted his teacher's superior position. If the conversation had ended at this point, Hashim might have understood and accepted that his interruption and the form of his question were inappropriate. However, Betsy continued and said that there was actually a pattern which explained the difference, and hence confirmed Hashim's legitimate position. That comment indicated that Hashim had asked a legitimate question that was taken seriously by the teacher and answered. Later in the lesson, Betsy even went back and thanked Hashim for asking such a "legitimate question", thereby encouraging him and accepting his participation behavior.

Other times, mostly after mid semester, Betsy did not allow Hashim to gain the floor so easily, as the following excerpt shows. Yet, Betsy still did not offer explicit feedback on Hashim's inappropriate turn-taking.

Excerpt 7
March 24, 2010

1.	Betsy:	I added right here good topic choice. I noticed when you were
2.		warming up, I mean people were really talking. Fareed was still
3.		talking. I was 'change partners', so people were really interested in
4.		this topic and so I think uhm.
5.	Hashim:	Excuse me.
6.	Betsy:	Yes.

7. Hashim: By the way, can I forward this question to you?
8. Betsy: You want to know my opinion?
9. Hashim: Don't worry about the language. If you get panic, we'll help you,
10. so.
11. Betsy: Okay.
12. Hashim: I'd like to hear your opinion [about
13. Betsy: [You'd like to hear my opinion, okay, you can send me an e-mail.

14. (*Class laughs.)*

15. Betsy: Uhm, this uhm, I was going to say that you are talking about you
16. know families may have differences, strong differences of opinion
17. here, and here there was a huge case. Have you ever heard of Terri
18. Schiavo? So, JJ just described a very famous case in Korea where
19. there are headlines every day. I liked his expression. He said it
20. was…

Here, while Betsy was evaluating the class discussion, Hashim interrupted her to ask her opinion about one of the discussion questions. Instead of answering Betsy's question in line 7, Hashim preferred to take up another teacher-like position by encouraging Betsy in line 8. His statement seemed quite irrelevant in the discourse. Why should an ESL teacher worry about her language use in an e-mail message or panic about it? Betsy's "okay" in a serious tone seemed to signal that she viewed the comment as off-topic and there was no uptake of Hashim's humor. She did not assist in the construction of his identity, ignoring the humorous interlude. Although Hashim persistently aimed to establish his own agenda, Betsy did not allow him to continue by suggesting "send me an e-mail" and continued her own agenda from where she left off. In this case, Betsy did not allow Hashim to continue to speak, but she did not fully reject his participation as she provided another option of communication via email.

Being the oldest student

A large number of studies have been conducted on age and second/foreign language acquisition with a focus on the effects of age on the rate of second language learning as well as ultimate achievement (See Ellis, 2008). Different than traditional SLA studies, my aim is not to explain the relations or correlations between age, cognitive development, and second language acquisition, but rather to show how age might have influenced the social positioning of learners in the oral skills class.

Hashim was the oldest student in the class. Although he was only 2 or 3 years older than the others, being the oldest student in class seemed to influence his social positioning, as acknowledged by one of his classmates, Gui Min, who was commenting on Hashim but then shifted her story line to gender issues in Saudi Arabia:

Gui Min: And we were talking about the Saudi Arabia. They treat women like a xxx. You know if you before marriage the women the female have sex with guys, they can let her die. They can kill her. It's not fair. I hate that. And the girls from Saudi Arabia are pretty. Pretty girls. And if they go out, they cover everything just eyes. Ugly black something stuff. Really ugly. I don't like it. Girls supposed to be pretty. Girls supposed to wear what they wanna wear. And why the boys can do everything what they want to do.

Researcher: Have you ever talked about these things with Hashim?

Gui Min: No. I talked about with a Saudi guy.

Researcher: Why not Hashim?

Gui Min: Uhmm (O.3) we just talk in the class. Not close friends. He's older.

Gui Min never discussed her ideas about gender relations in Saudi Arabia with Hashim as she did not feel close and felt that Hashim was older. Hashim's difficulty in building friendships in class might be therefore related to his age. Betsy also highlighted

Hashim's age as an important factor influencing his social positioning. As I illustrated in the story lines above, Hashim created multiple opportunities to interact with Betsy by initiating conversations or inviting Betsy into these conversations, which turned classroom discourse into a dialogue between him and Betsy. It was obvious that Hashim wanted to interact more with Betsy than he did with his classmates. Although Hashim explained it based on his desire to interact with native speakers, for Betsy, the reason was Hashim's age. While describing her relations with Hashim, Betsy said:

> Betsy: I think he's just trying to get along with me in a certain kind of way and I think he feels older. If you noticed, he doesn't relate very much to other students between class. I mean he doesn't seem to have anybody he hangs out with, so I think he almost feels more comfortable dealing with me, this older person, than he does with his peers. I think he's a little fish out of water in knowing how to deal with them and I don't know what his prejudices are against the person of color well here is Rolanda. I don't know if I will come to any conclusions as time goes on, but I will say that I see him as a really hybrid (0.2) a person who's lived and worked in France for some amount of time, lived and worked in Italy for some amount of time, so I don't know what he is doing is an attempt to be a European or whether it's coming from being a *(Hashim's nationality)*. So I think I have more questions than answers about him. (First Interview with Betsy: February 22, 2010)

Indeed, Hashim, being slightly older than the other students, perhaps wanted to establish or display his adult-identity in the class. Drawing on Knowles (1984), Kenner and Weinerman (2011) list four principles that characterize adult learners:

a. They are self directed, take responsibility for their own actions, and resist having information arbitrarily imposed on them.
b. They have an extensive depth of experience, which serves as a critical component in the foundation of their self identity.
c. They are ready to learn. As most adult learners return to college voluntarily, they are likely to actively engage in the learning process.
d. They are task motivated. Adult students returning to college attend for a specific goal and the primary component of their motivational drive tends to be internal. (p. 89)

Hashim displayed these four characteristics when he chose his partner(s) for pair- or group-work, referred to his study/work abroad experience in classroom discussions, questioned the usefulness of classroom tasks or assignments, or had real academic goals. His dominance in classroom talk perhaps was a result of his desire to establish and display an autonomous adult learner identity. Yet this identity development or negotiation was complex. Despite his age and need to establish an adult-learner identity, Hashim's actions often seemed to be those of a teenager. For example, he often challenged Betsy's authority and resisted it, which are typical characteristics of teenage-parent interactions. Here is how Betsy characterized the oral skills class and Hashim:

> Betsy: Hmm characterize this class. It does not feel like it's gelled. It feels like either kind of immature teenage behavior mixed with insecurity about or a lack of confidence concerning academic things. Let me take Hashim for example, here's a guy who has lived in England for what two years. He has also lived in Italy at some point and worked there. He lived in France and worked there. And obviously personal just one-to-one, he can be quite personable, even quite charming, but my guess is that he maybe is a person who has a little trouble as a student. Because when you get somebody who can't read the directions for something and grasp it, then there's a question mark in my head about what's going to transpire with him. We frequently especially with Arab students who typically are quick learners orally but not good in reading and writing, maybe in part because surely in part because of the totally different alphabet and you know they have huge hurdles to overcome but also I also think that surely their culture and what they value are much more oral and interpersonal than that they really are on paper. Maybe that's what their education system emphasizes because these guys have some terrible times with plagiarism. Oh my Gosh, they plagiarize, you know, they are like dealing with my son when they are 13 14 years old, 'I don't wanna write this mom. I don't wanna write it. I don't wanna physically write it out'. (First interview with Betsy: February 22, 2010)

Although Betsy did not explicitly position Hashim as a student who displayed teenage behavior, she compared Arab students' resistance to writing to the resistance shown by

her children when they were teenagers. A teenage-parent relation was also reflected in her description of teacher-student interaction. This similarity was also mentioned by Hashim himself:

> Hashim: We've been taught before that the university is your second house and the teacher, if she is woman, is your second mother. If he's a man, he is your second father. So you treat them with lots of respect and he should mercy you. I mean he should treat you with the mercy. That's it! So with this concept, I mean you know I came with this concept here. I didn't find this concept here with the rest of the teachers. No, just the class and homework between me and you. That's it and this is your credit. (Final Interview with Hashim: May 3, 2010)

For Hashim, a teacher-student relation was similar to the relation between a parent and child. In the oral skills class, he acted like a child who expected Betsy's understanding. Furthermore, Hashim was aware that the roles of a teacher in his home country were different than the roles of a teacher in this new cultural setting. Despite his awareness, he did not seem to accept the differences. His repetition of "that's it" reveals that he did not seem willing to negotiate these differences and his own roles. It is this resistance that I discuss in detail in the following section.

Conflicting identities and resisting negotiation

Hashim's identity negotiation was full of contradictions. As I said before, although Hashim was aware of teacher-student roles in the new setting, he did not want to accept these roles which were different than those in his country. For example, several times in the interviews or classroom interactions, Hashim positioned Betsy as the only source of knowledge. According to Hashim, Betsy's knowledge should be accepted and respected. This interactive positioning of his teacher is seen in the three examples I share

below. However, what Hashim did in class was in conflict with his professed beliefs. He often challenged Betsy's authority, frequently asking her questions for which he himself already knew the answers, or asking how Betsy knew what she knew, or challenging Betsy's methodological decisions. Hashim's interactive positioning of Betsy as a teacher who was in authority that should not be challenged was in conflict with his reflexive positioning of himself as a student who indeed threatened her authority in class.

Hashim's beliefs about his teacher are reflected in the following two excerpts from two classroom activities. The first excerpt depicts an interaction between Hashim and Betsy as Betsy went over a short vocabulary test with the students. After they answered multiple-choice questions together in order for students to check their answers, Betsy asked them if they had any questions:

Excerpt 10
February 1, Monday

1.	Betsy:	We have time one more question. If anybody has [
2.	Hashim:	[No, just. Can I argue for the answer one virtually and immune. I
3.		am not agree with you to be an A. For number A, I think it's more
4.		clearer to be A and number two more clearer to be B or that that's
5.		just it?
6.	Betsy:	Okay, so number one and number two are the ones that you have
7.		questions about, okay
8.	Hashim:	I am agree with you for the rest. We're okay, but just if you have
9.	Betsy:	Well, what did you put for number two?
10.	Hashim:	I think it's B.
11.	Chen:	B. Yeah.
12.	Hashim:	Yeah, me too. It's clear from there.
13.	Betsy:	Okay, it [
14.	Hashim:	[I don't know it's up to you. You are the director.
15.	Betsy:	That's (0.1) it's out of my hands.
16.	Hashim:	Really?
17.	Betsy:	It's the dictionary.
18.	Hashim:	Oh, okay, so sorry.

19. Betsy: And, so you guys answered the opposite, so if you said ….

Before the class moved on to the next activity, Hashim stated that he was not clear why the answer for question number two was A and not B. Since Chen agreed with Hashim (line 11), Hashim continued to support his position until line 14 when he seemed to be having a dilemma and stopped supporting his argument against Betsy by saying, "I don't know it's up to you" followed by his statement, "You are the director". By saying this, Hashim clearly positioned Betsy as the sole authority and source of knowledge in class. In a way, his statement in line 14 indicated that he would accept Betsy's answer even if it was wrong because she was the one he believed to have knowledge and power. Indeed, in my interview with Hashim, he explicitly stated that a teacher's knowledge or status cannot be challenged:

> Hashim: For example, let's say taking writing class, 3500, with Ms Betsy. I took course before. Preparation course for the IELTS exam. So I've been told that after you finish sentence you just put a period. Here they would period full stop. But we call full stop. So she looked at me and said what did you do Hashim? And then she explains to me that's wrong, so I didn't say anything. I just have to follow the rules. She is my teacher. That's it. (First interview with Hashim; February 1, 2010)

Reflecting on an experience here, Hashim said that Betsy preferred the term "period" over "full stop" and wanted Hashim to use "period". Hashim's comments, "So, I didn't say anything. I just have to follow the rules. She is my teacher. That's it", do not leave any room for negotiation.

In another incident, Hashim was going to present on health and diet and started to call on others in class to elicit answers to his questions in the introduction phase of his

presentation. After he asked the question "How many cups of water do you drink every day?" to several students, he made eye contact with me waiting for an answer:

Excerpt 11
April 28,

1. Hashim: Okay, I would like to ask question. How many cups of water do
2. you drink everyday? Okay, Martina.
3. Martina: I drink a lot because of my practice
4. Hashim: Ahmad?
5. Ahmad: Four, five.
6. Hashim: Four, five. Rolanda?.
7. Rolanda: (Inaudible)
8. Hashim: Be honest please.

9. *(Hashim maintains eye contact with me seeking an answer.)*

10. Researcher: Ten maybe.
11. Hashim: Okay, we don't want ten; we don't want three. Okay? We just want
12. eight. Even if she is a teacher, no just eight, okay?

13. (*Class laughs*.)

14. Hashim: Okay, as you could see here, the thing about water…

In the excerpt above, Hashim highlighted my teacher identity when he evaluated my answer to his warm up question. He did not accept my answer; yet his statement "even if she is a teacher" signaled his assumption or belief that teachers' answers cannot be challenged in general.

Overall, Hashim knew that the teacher had more power and should not be challenged. He was also aware of the power differentials between a teacher and student as well as the differences in their roles. However, his reflexive positioning of himself and

interactive positioning of Betsy contradicted his beliefs. Perhaps his desire for recognition and status resulted in the contradictions I have described.

More on Ahmad's Participation and Positioning

Despite being very talkative, Ahmad was lonely and isolated. He felt increasingly isolated as he eventually (and ironically) became the person participating the most orally in class. Despite his various efforts, Ahmad's marginal position did not seem to change throughout the observation period. It is important to interpret Ahmad's isolation contextually and in relation to the social dynamics of the class. In the following section, I discuss factors and issues which created or influenced Ahmad's isolation.

Friendships in class

It was the fourth class session when Ahmad and Martina transferred to the oral from a higher proficiency level class. When they attended this class, students had already spent time in getting to know each other. Being a late comer was not a big issue for Martina as she had her friends from the tennis team who were also taking language classes in the IEP. However, it was a difficulty Ahmad had to deal with as he did not know anyone in the class.

Over time, the Asian students in class formed their own group. They always sat together in class, seemed to have fun during breaks, and spent time outside. Betsy described their friendship in detail:

Betsy: Chen, Gui Min, JJ, those are folks who supported each other a lot. A lot of times, the Asian stick together. Chinese, Japanese, Korean they have to stick with each other. Chen, Gui Min, and JJ. JJ became the little brother of the group. He teased them and hung out with them. You know they made their food; they ate together. They like Asian food. They're well-disciplined. 'So, tomorrow it's your turn to bring the food'. And I don't know if you ever

> noticed, they always ate together. Once they established that habit, they just created this little social group. But, that's not unique. It's very often here that the Asian students like Asian food. They like to eat healthy. And just a lot of times the Asians feel comfortable with Asians. Those cultures have a lot in common, so they just have a lot more in common. (Final Interview with Betsy: May 7, 2010)

Noticeably wanting to have fun with each other, the Asian students, Gui Min, Chen, and JJ, participated in many activities together and as they shared cultural and linguistic histories, they developed a sense of solidarity as well as forming cohesive friendships. It was difficult for others to become a part of the Asian group, but it was more difficult for Ahmad because he would not meet the most important criteria of friendship defined by Gui Min:

Researcher: So, what makes you good friends?

Researcher**:** Because I like them. Nice girls. I mean every girl here is nice but the nice is different. I like the girl nice and not that much talking. Not just blah blah blah I don't like that girl. Too girly I think. I like the girl just normal. Like Chen. She is normal. Even her English is really good. And X, she is normal. Not that much talking. And, yeah, friendly. And I like the girl always smiling. I like them, so we like each other. We always bring some snacks, some fruit, for lunch, because we always eat together. And, okay, I like the girl is modest. Not I don't like the girl kind of like uhm…

It did not seem possible for Ahmad to become part of this social group as he was very talkative and not modest (positioned like this by Gui Min in another interview), important features of a friend for Gui Min who was the social leader of the Asian group in class. While the Asian students formed their own social group, boundaries became more rigid for others.

Like the Asian students, Fareed and Martina were good friends. Hashim was able to join this mini group as he often and spontaneously sat by Martina to serve as a helper, guide, or subteacher for her. He was very didactic in helping Martina, but also used jokes pretty often. Martina expressed how much she enjoyed working with him. By sitting near Martina, Hashim was able to interact with them and became an accepted member of this group. Ahmad did not belong to any existing group. It became impossible for him to join Martina's group as Martina did not like him.

Another reason for Ahmad's social distance was that he did not live in the same city as these students. Although Rolanda, Martina, Gui Min, and others organized parties and created many opportunities for themselves to socialize outside, Ahmad was able to attend only one party over the semester. His uncle also did not seem to be pleased by his attending these parties and did not give him permission. All these factors inside and outside the class made it difficult for Ahmad to join the peer groups in class.

The power of "teacher talk"

This analysis of classroom discourse in this study has shown that the classroom teacher may also invest in particular identity positions for students. In my opinion, Betsy was a wonderful teacher who cared very much about each student in her class. My analysis and conclusions about her instruction here should not be interpreted as a lack of ability to teach or any weakness. They only show how positioning goes unnoticed in classroom events.

Betsy had differentiated attitudes to Hashim's and Ahmad's participation behaviors. While she seemed to be very supportive of Hashim's contributions, laughed at

his jokes, seemed to enjoy his contributions, encouraged his turn-taking, she did not show the same flexibility toward Ahmad's participation. To the contrary, she stopped Ahmad from participating several times as she herself acknowledged:

> Betsy: Ahmad, again I would say there was some interaction and that was just more of just trying to get him to contain himself. The way I tried to deal with that was talking to him individually by himself and communicating that. And then sometimes using I remember there were some times when I would just use my hands and it goes like "quit" "stop" and he of course did not like to respond to that.

Such feedback supported other students' positioning of Ahmad as arrogant because even the classroom teacher acknowledged his problematic participation behavior. In turn, Ahmad was blamed for failing to meet the teacher's expectations. Even Hashim realized that his own participation behavior was inappropriate when Betsy provided feedback on Ahmad's participation:

> Hashim: I noticed twice, once like Ahmad, he was participating like he likes to say something. But she really clever, Betsy, she interrupt with friendly way, kindly way. I noticed that.
>
> Hayriye: What is the friendly way?
>
> Hashim: Uhm yes, she asked we were in a discussion and he is trying to summarize and he spent a long time. I noticed that. So she said, she smiled and said that "oh this is the summary, this is the summary. So I took that one in mind; kept it in mind. (Final Interview with Hashim: May 3, 2010)

Like Hashim, other students also became aware that Betsy did not approve of Ahmad's participation behavior. Teachers have greater power than students in classroom settings (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2002; Reeves, 2009). Therefore, the positions assigned by them, implicitly or explicitly, are more difficult for students to resist (Reeves, 2009). While Betsy's attitudes toward Hashim's participation advanced his own self-positioning, her

attitudes toward Ahmad clearly contributed to other students' positioning of Ahmad as an arrogant student. Especially since most of the students described Betsy as their favorite teacher and respected her very much, it is possible that her reactions to Ahmad's participation might have impacted other students' opinions about him. It is important to note here that Betsy did not purposefully help others to position Ahmad in the ways they did. Her goal was to provide opportunities for everybody to participate.

Proficiency

The discrepancies in participatory and proficiency levels in this class contributed to the development of "differential identities of competence" (DaSilva-Iddings, 2005, p. 176) between Ahmad and other students, putting Ahmad into a higher status in the classroom hierarchy. Most of the students in the oral skills class were at a lower level than Ahmad in terms of linguistic proficiency. Over the course of the semester, most of them stated that they were not able to contribute to class discussions as much as they desired. Among the reasons they mentioned for their lack of participation were their limited speaking ability, fear of making mistakes, and their feelings of inferiority to their teacher and classmates. Therefore, it was obvious that they experienced linguistic challenges. Indeed, all of the students in the oral skills class made more grammatical mistakes while speaking than Ahmad did. Ahmad also used vocabulary that was not taught in class and used more complex vocabulary than others. His difference in terms of language proficiency was also addressed by Betsy:

Final interview with Betsy

Betsy: And of course I think we've talked about before I mean his spoken English just took off. And it seems he was able to speak from the

> beginning. I think he got put in this class and this happened before and it's one of the issues with the oral skills. A person can be in this class will be maybe one of the very best speakers but have bad note-taking skills or not have done very well and so whoever is doing the placement will look at those skills and go 'this person may not - we don't know what their TOEFL scores are gonna turn out to be – so we definitely are gonna make it possible for them to be here two semesters. So we don't wanna put them in 5500 based on their speaking, we're gonna put them in 4500 based on their listening.' So you get that mix in here. And I could say that that was a challenge too. I mean he's speaking!

Everybody in the oral skills class was aware of Ahmad's more advanced speaking skills and vocabulary. While participating orally, Ahmad frequently checked with his classmates if they knew the meanings of particular words he used or if they understood what he said. However, as I indicated in several story lines above, most of the time, the students did not seem to understand the words he used, which sometimes resulted in their frustration. This frustration was clearly seen in Gui Min's reaction to Ahmad's participation:

Gui Min: Just keep talking. Let him talk. I don't like to stop people's talk. It's not that good but okay talk. And waiting for the next chance. He just talk talk talk and always 'you know' 'you know'. And I ask myself 'I know what? I know what?'. 'You know blah blah blah.' 'You know.' 'I don't know.' (*laughs*) 'You know blah blah blah. You know'(0.3) I don't know. It's like a little embarrass and you all say (0.3) to be polite (0.3) yeah, uhu uhu. And inside 'I know what? I don't know!" He keeps saying 'you know'. 'I don't know anything!'

Gui Min's repetitions of Ahmad's "you know"s that he used frequently to check their understanding were quite frustrating for Gui Min as she did not understand the content of his talk most of the time. She only pretended that she understood to save face because it was "embarrassing" for her. Gui Min and other students did not want to be constructed as less competent by not participating as much as Ahmad or by not being able to

communicate with him, nor were they able to construct a more equal competent position. Ahmad was definitely more articulate and advanced. Instead of positioning themselves as less competent members, particularly in terms of linguistic competence, they positioned Ahmad as an arrogant student who dominated classroom conversations. Perhaps it was the fear of being viewed as less competent or less intelligent because of limited English or silence that made these students position Ahmad as an arrogant student. By assigning him a negative position, they could be "legitimately" silent which could be perceived as a strength rather than a weakness.

Contradictory reflexive and interactive positioning

Interestingly, Ahmad's reflexive positioning of himself in the oral skills class contradicted the positions assigned to him by his classmates and teacher. When Ahmad found himself in a marginal position, he actively resisted his marginality. His attempt to reposition himself did not seem to change the interactive positionings of him by his classmates in any obvious way:

Ahmad: You know I have that problem. Sometimes, I speak without raising my hands. But I am not doing it intentionally. It's naturally. I'm not doing it on purpose to harm or disturb the teacher. So sometimes people don't understand me. They think that I wanna show off that I know many things so every time I jump in and I am not like that. You know I am very humble. I keep my feet on the ground so the thing is that when I know something, just kind of my head, I just get it out. Sometimes, I calm myself down and just realize that I have to raise my hand. But it depends on the intensity of my when it comes to my head I found it I answer. But I really participate. I answer as many questions as possible. Because I want the teacher to have a good impression of me. Sometimes, when I don't do the homework it's not I don't want to do that. Maybe I had something interfered with that. So, I am really good student. If you ask other my teachers, they will tell you that. All those teachers know my name. They really know me well and they never forget me. (First interview with Ahmad: March 3, 2010)

Ahmad was aware that others did not perceive him as a humble student, but reflexively positioned himself as considerate and humble. However, his reflexive positioning was in complete contradiction with Betsy's interactive positioning of him:

> Betsy: They became obviously quite fond of him (*Hashim*) and I think he interacted better and better with them. But Ahmad is just pretty full of himself. He (*referring to Hashim*) also managed to whether by accident or design to project a little humble attitude. I mean Ahmad of course never projects an humble attitude.

These excerpts highlight paradoxes between reflexive and interactive positionings of Ahmad. Noted are the stark contrasts that existed between the description of Ahmad from his point of view and from the point of view of Betsy. Ahmad describes himself as a humble person. However, it is clear that Ahmad was not so perceived by the teacher. Similarly, he positioned himself as "funny, nice, cool, respectful, polite" and these adjectives were used by his friends to describe what Ahmad was not.

Summary

Through a recursive micro-analysis of classroom interaction and qualitative analysis of other data sources, the findings showed two ESL students in the oral skills class took up powerful positions by dominating classroom discourse. One of these students, Hashim, engaged in teacher-like positions, displayed his symbolic power whenever possible, and often challenged the authority of his teacher by criticizing her methodological choices. However, by building friendships with particular students in class and using humor frequently as a communication strategy, he was able to become an accepted member of the oral skills class. The second focal participant, Ahmad, who mirrored Hashim, displayed his competence, highlighted unique aspects of his self, and

produced long turns in classroom talk. Since he perceived the classroom environment as a competition rather than collaboration and wished to be recognized as "the best student" in class, he always dominated classroom discussions. However, unlike Hashim, he was not able to be "in the group" because his participation behavior was not accepted by his classmates who positioned him as an arrogant, inconsiderate, and consequently an outsider. Because Ahmad was outside the group socially in that class and others, he needed and demanded attention. He was bright and articulate and perhaps others did not see him as fitting in because they were less so and because they did not understand him well. They all attributed a character to him because his proficiency level was strong and this led to a position of arrogance. At the end, while interactive and reflexive positioning of the two focal participants created learning opportunities for these two learners, their participation usually did not allow other students to benefit from those opportunities. Negotiating cultural capital, competence, and power therefore became a major challenge for all students.

CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

Research Questions

The study presented herein took place in an academic intensive English oral skills classroom, consisting of nine fully participating students and their ESL teacher, and initially aiming to address the following research questions:

1) How does positioning occur in an IEP ESL classroom and facilitate or hinder classroom participation?
2) How do the ESL learners negotiate positional identities, power, competence, and participation in classroom activities?
3) How does positioning interact with English language learning?

However, after spending a certain amount of time in the field, I decided to focus on two students, as their positioning and participation were different both in terms of quantity and quality. I still addressed the research questions above, but focused on particular students. I am therefore not providing a general explanation or answer for those questions. Because my focus shifted from the whole class to two students over time, I found it necessary to add a new research question, which is:

4) How do dominant students get access to learning opportunities in an ESL classroom?

In this chapter, I summarize and interpret findings with regard to the above questions, discuss relevant theoretical and practical implications as well as limitations, and make recommendations for future research. In conducting this study, my goal was never to seek "answers", but gain an in-depth understanding of the issues raised in the questions above. I can claim with much satisfaction that my research methodologies as well as time spent in the ESL class have indeed helped me accomplish that goal.

This study is framed by the Positioning Theory of Davies & Harré (1999) as well as other theories associated with positioning (Holland et al., 1998) and power (Norton, 2000). The study adopts a post-structural view of SLA, which emphasizes that language learning is beyond mere acquisition of grammar rules and vocabulary of the target language. Rather, L2 learning influences and is influenced by social, cultural, and political contexts as well as issues of power. The most recent research in the field of post-structural SLA has focused on the local context, examining how power and identities are negotiated in specific social contexts, such as classroom settings, and how this negotiation affects and is affected by second language learning.

This study examined the issues of power, positioning, and participation as they were manifested in an oral skills IEP classroom where students came from different cultural and educational backgrounds and spoke various languages. This study sought to examine positionings experienced by the ESL teacher and her students in this classroom. This was a place where students tried to learn how to adjust to new cultural norms and rules while at the same time their identities that were in constant flux. The negotiation was complex and power relations were always at work. The findings of this study

indicated that the negotiation impacted students' access to learning opportunities in classroom events and ultimately their L2 learning and use.

A qualitative case study was chosen because of the complexity of the multiple factors under consideration. The research procedures were guided by the assumptions of interpretive discourse analysis. Data analyzed and reported in this study were collected as part of a 3.5-month qualitative case study of teacher-student and student-student interactions. To address the research questions, multiple data sources were used including expanded field notes, video and audio recordings of classroom events, interviews with the teacher and the students, student diaries, and collection of artifacts. These data were analyzed using the constant-comparison method (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) together with sociolinguistic microanalyses of student-student and student-teacher interactions. This ongoing analysis led to themes and hypotheses that are discussed in this and previous chapters. I discuss the limitations to this study's findings before summarizing and discussing findings.

Overview of Chapters

In chapter 2, I introduced Positioning Theory, defined concepts such as power, opportunities, and competence. I then introduced the ways in which Positioning Theory has informed research in educational settings including mainstream and ESL classrooms. Scholars drawing on Positioning Theory have argued that students do not come into classrooms always marginalized, but are assigned such positions, and either gain or lose access to classroom participation and language learning opportunities. The chapter also discussed the research on ESL classroom participation. In chapter 3, I introduced my

methodological and analytical approaches to doing research. Findings were presented in Chapter 4.

Limitations

The findings of this study may not be generalized to other settings or participants. However, given the adequate and detailed descriptions I provided in laying out all the necessary details of the research process (Shank, 2006), the results of this study can be *transferred* to a different setting, or used with a different population.

Another limitation of the research reported here is related to the diaries students kept. Although I provided students with detailed guidelines and asked them several follow-up questions after they turned in their diaries on the days scheduled, unfortunately some students did not write much in diaries. The reason for this was not because of their unwillingness, but their unfamiliarity with and lack of experience in diary writing. I therefore decided to use diary entries as supplementary data. Additionally, my participants were full time students. All of them were enrolled in other intensive language courses in the IEP, which meant they had to spent more than 30 hours per week on their course-work. Some of them, for example, Ahmad, lived in another city and had to commute to school every day. I had to reschedule my first interview with Ahmad four times as it was so hard to find a time in his tight schedule. All these circumstances limited face-to-face member-checking with my student-participants as they were not available to meet with me often. Therefore, my member-checking mostly occurred in written exchanges via Facebook or email.

Another limitation was two students' refusal to be in the research study. Some of the conversations that my focal students were involved in with these students had to be eliminated because I did not have those students' permission.

Finally, a lack of contextualization is another limitation of the study. Although I provided thick descriptions of participation behaviors, backgrounds, and experience of the two focal participants, little was said about other student-participants. Thick descriptions of non-focal participants, such as their socio-cultural backgrounds, classroom interactions, etc., would have been illuminating in understanding how the two focal participants differed from the rest of the classroom. Documenting how non-focal participants influenced the events and interactions in an everyday classroom would have helped the reader to better understand the positioning in this particular classroom. Additionally, I recognize the role and importance of socio-cultural backgrounds of participants in impacting the positions that the students assign to themselves or others in class because the story lines are shaped by participants' histories and experience. However, since my focus was on what was happening in the classroom, I minimized the descriptions of participants' cultural, political, and social backgrounds.

Summary of Findings

In the oral skills class I observed, students always positioned themselves and others in and through classroom talk. It became apparent that their reflexive and interactive positioning influenced their access to participation. By participating in classroom practices, the students were not simply acquiring a second language but also (re)constructing the sense of who they were in this new cultural setting.

Initial SLA theories provided sufficient evidence indicating that the opportunity to process extensive and comprehensible spoken or written input is an important component of language learning (See Krashen, 1982, 1985, 2003). Similarly, there is good evidence that output that learners produce positively adds to second language development and leads to proficiency gains (See Long, 1980, 1989, 1996). An important finding of the study is that when students reflexively took on powerful positions, although they created learning opportunities for themselves, or gained access to input, they denied their classmates that access. For example, the two focal participants took up powerful positions by taking turns frequently and displaying their cultural and linguistic knowledge. However, most of the time, their reflexive and interactive positioning and participation behavior did not allow other students to receive comprehensible input or produce output. Crabbe (2007) argues that "learning a language requires the effective take-up of connected chains of these learning opportunities" (p. 119) Therefore, second language learning was influenced by dominant participation behavior of the two focal participants.

Another important finding of this study is that some students perceived the classroom environment as competition, rather than collaboration, and they constantly dominated classroom conversations and denied learning opportunities to other students. Negotiating cultural capital, competence, and power therefore became a major challenge for all students.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Positioning, Positional Identities, and Language Learning

In the fields of applied linguistics and second language acquisition, ample evidence has been provided documenting the necessity and importance of social interaction for second language acquisition (van Compernolle, 2010). Social interaction is believed to provide opportunities for language learners to a) notice gaps in their linguistic competence, b) negotiate meaning, c) receive comprehensible input, and d) produce comprehensible output, which are all assumed to be necessary and crucial for second language acquisition to occur. The method called communicative language teaching has been proposed to highlight the importance of communication in language classrooms (see Nunan, 2003) and teachers have been encouraged to provide learners with opportunities to purposefully interact in the target language.

In this study, positioning theory (Davies & Harré, 1990) helped me understand the complexity connected with positioning and second language learning. Positioning allows or limits others to say and do things. In a language classroom, positioning is important because it either limits or gives people access to language experiences or opportunities that are believed to foster language learning in the classroom. If students have limited access to or have fewer opportunities to talk, they will have fewer opportunities to be listened to and be scaffolded, and they will receive less feedback, which in turn will negatively impact their second language learning and use. In short, positioning can lead to more and better language acquisition experiences for some students, and to fewer and poorer such experiences for others.

Indeed, the findings of this study showed that the ways that students positioned themselves and other students and the ways that they were positioned by the classroom

teacher impacted their access to learning opportunities, and thereby their second language learning. Two focal participants' interactions demonstrated how powerful positions could be in terms of allowing or limiting others to say and do things. By assigning strong positions to themselves, the two focal participants created learning opportunities for themselves or were able to gain access to learning opportunities whereas this access was denied to other students. For example, one of these students, Hashim, frequently interrupted his teacher to ask her questions. While he was able to receive comprehensible input by getting answers to his questions, the other students did not benefit from this because the conversations usually developed between Hashim and the teacher, and other students were not involved. It can therefore be concluded that various categories of students receive differential learning opportunities because of positioning.

It is important for classroom teachers to be aware of how their words and the words of others can shape classroom talk. Positioning can lead to language experiences that we want our students to have in the classroom. van Langenhove and Harré (1999) suggest that

> First, people will differ in their capacity to position themselves and others, their mastery of the techniques so to speak. Secondly, they will differ in their willingness or intention to position and be positioned. Thirdly, they will also differ in their power to achieve positioning acts. (p. 30)

The task of the classroom teacher should be to diagnose these differences, look for ways to handle unequal power differentials, and help each student use them to their advantage.

Supporting the findings of other recent studies on positioning and discourse (e.g., Miller, 2007), this study suggests that positioning not only shapes interactions within

each story line but also forms one's identity over time across various story lines. Positions that individuals assign to others or are assigned by others have an accumulated impact on one's self development. Perhaps, this is the most important contribution of this study to positioning theory. In positioning theory, the emphasis is on the current moment as well as the positions that emerge over a particular interaction. It does not emphasize the link between the present and the future. Constant indication of one's expectations of others, acceptances, or resistances, suggest particular identities for individuals. As Rex and Schiller argue, "others recognize these identities because they are displayed over and over again" (p. 20). As we have seen in this study, Hashim did not become a "helpful", "funny" classmate in one day, nor did Ahmad become an "inconsiderate", "arrogant" student all of a sudden. They took up these positional identities because of the ways they positioned themselves and the ways they were positioned by others over the semester.

If classroom teachers become aware of positions, they may invent strategies to shape the classroom discourse to help learners position themselves in ways beneficial to their identity development and language learning. By using Positioning Theory, classroom teachers can see alternative ways of saying things and look for alternatives to existing practices. By critically listening to the voices of students in classroom talk, teachers can get a better understanding of how power is negotiated in classroom discourse. Such an understanding will help them recognize different dynamics of classroom participation and create more effective classroom talk through which learners can create positive selves.

Dominant Voices and Rethinking Classroom Participation

One of the major contributions of this study to the current literature is its focus on outspoken students in a classroom. The traditional research on classroom participation had focused on the individual and highlighted affective factors, individual differences, level of linguistic proficiency and cultural backgrounds in understanding students' participation. I found this literature problematic in two aspects. First, the literature on classroom participation mostly focused on silent students, but almost no research was conducted on dominant or outspoken students. Johnston (2011) argues that:

> The twin phenomena of student silence and excessive talkativeness present significant moral dilemmas to language teachers. Since students are known to benefit from extensive speaking in the classroom, and yet some are reluctant to do so while others do so to excess, the teacher is faced with an interlocking series of moral challenges. To what extent should students be forced to speak against their will? How can quiet students be encouraged to speak more? Should "noisy" students ever be silenced, or disciplined in some way? Above all, how can opportunities for talk, and thus for learning, be shared equitably among more and less talkative students? (p. 8)

Indeed, the findings of this study indicated that the two outspoken students were quite disruptive to the flow of the class. Although they always dominated classroom conversations and created learning opportunities for themselves, other students had difficulties in taking turns or extending their talk. While it is important for teachers to discuss affective factors, such as lack of self-confidence or uncertainty of goals, that might affect participation and opportunity-take up (Crabbe, 2007), teachers should also suggest strategies that students can use while interacting with outspoken or dominant students. Furthermore, each student can be encouraged to keep learning logs in which they can discuss how well and how often they created learning opportunities for

themselves as well as how well and how often they have taken up the opportunities available.

Second, the previous research on classroom participation had focused on the individual but ignored the role of social context. Cazden (2001), in her description of traditional and non-traditional lessons, states that, in traditional classrooms, discourse is usually shaped and guided by the teacher through a "three-part sequence of teacher initiation, student response, and teacher evaluation (IRE) or teacher feedback (IRF)" (p. 30). In those classrooms, participation is viewed as an individual activity and therefore each student is seen as responsible and evaluated for the level of his/her participation. This understanding of classroom participation has been problematized by describing participation a "multiparty accomplishment", a "collective, rather than an individual, process" (Schultz, 2009, p. 11) during which the rights and obligations for talk and participation are always established and re-established not only by the classroom teacher but also students. Classroom participation is therefore not a predictable thing. The findings of this study support this claim and suggest that classroom participation is not an individual act but a socially constructed phenomenon that requires complex negotiation. A student's participation is shaped by interactional factors connected to other students' turn-taking behaviors and responses to their utterances. For example, in my description of the interaction between Rolanda and Hashim in Part I of Chapter 4, I showed how Rolanda's participation could not be described without considering Hashim's positions in the discourse. Blaming Rolanda for her lack of participation in pair work or positioning her as a student who was interactionally slower would be very misleading given the fact

that her attempts to participate were indeed hampered by another member of the classroom, Hashim. Therefore, based on the findings of this study, I suggest that the notions of classroom participation should be broadened and each individual should be evaluated within the discourses h/she was a part of.

Explicit discussion of classroom participation rules and norms

In their discussion of Positioning Theory, Harré and Langenhove (1999) state that

> When a person says "I feel OK", this involves not only the skills necessary to talk and to make a judgment about oneself, but also to know when it is appropriate to say such a thing and to have insight into what will happen when saying it. It is only because people have some knowledge of rules, and have expectations, that meaningful communication is possible. (Harré & Langenhove, 1999, p. 4)

It was obvious that some student-participants in this study lacked the knowledge and insights necessary for appropriate classroom participation and meaningful communication. For example, Hashim did not seem to know when it was appropriate to interrupt his teacher to ask her opinion. He could not guess the possible consequences of his interruptions, either. Therefore, he was not able to create "meaningful communication" with his classmates and Betsy many times and created "awkward moments" in classroom discourse.

Furthermore, as Davies (2000) suggests, most of the students easily "recognize what is meant by "good school behavior" and they take up, for the most part, the behaviors consistent with this meaning" (p. 147). However, I argue that "what is meant by "good school behavior" indeed depends on and changes from culture to culture. While in some cultures, it may refer to sitting quietly in class and listening to teacher without interrupting, it might require active participation from students in other cultures. In an

ESL class, the issue becomes much more complex given the fact that students come from different cultural backgrounds with different understandings of "good school behavior". In this study, for example, the two focal participants, Ahmad and Hashim, in particular, had hard times because their understanding of "good school student" (Davies, 2000, p. 147) and classroom participation was mismatched with the cultural and social norms of the target setting. Indeed, the students viewed classroom participation differently. The classroom environment for them was a setting in which to compete with their classmates

I therefore suggest that ESL teachers provide direct instruction regarding the participation rules and norms in the target setting early in the academic year or semester by presenting a discussion of a full range of language learning opportunities. Expecting that learners will acquire those rules and norms implicitly over time through observation may never happen. Similarly, introducing rules in the middle of the semester upon realizing inappropriate participation behavior may discourage active learners and they may never speak up again. Yet, if all learners know the rules and norms at the beginning, adjustment will be easier for everyone. Crabbe argues that (2007):

> learning opportunities are available to learners everywhere at all times – in classrooms, on the bus, in the community, alone. The take-up of private learning opportunities requires a degree of self-direction and so it follows that the take-up of learning opportunities needs modeling (p. 119).

If ESL teachers want learners to succeed in the new social setting outside of the class or in their academic and work environments, then guiding them towards using learning opportunities is essential. As Crabbe further suggests (2007), "when learners are engaged in managing learning opportunities in classroom tasks, they are better equipped,

and therefore more likely, to manage learning opportunities outside the classroom" (p. 120).

Negotiating Power and Competence

The findings of this study indicated that power was not something that individuals constantly held nor was it something institutionally or hierarchically determined. Instead, the students and classroom teacher were "active participants in the locally situated, often delicate negotiation of power" (Morita, 2002, p. 180). For example, the classroom teacher, who is expected to be more powerful institutionally, was in fact powerless several times over the semester. Similarly, students, while expected to be less powerful, occasionally managed to gain power and status over their teacher. Power always (re)constructed itself and circulated among the members of the classroom through talk.

Positioning and power were, most of the time, invisible. Especially during pair- or group-work, the positioning and power relations were invisible to the classroom teacher, who might have simply labeled some groups as cooperative and productive as the task was completed successfully and on time. Yet, when examined carefully and critically, one could notice how unequal power relations in the discourse influenced the level of participation and restricted some students' participation to some degree. It is therefore necessary for classroom teachers to help less powerful students resist and find new ways to position themselves in classroom practices.

It was obvious that Hashim had entered this classroom with a desire to be successful and accepted as a high status student because he believed this was what his family expected from him. A similar aim was seen in Ahmad. Their ambition for

recognition was so strong that they both appeared to view learning process as a competition rather than collaboration with peers and struggled to take up powerful positions. As Rex and Schiller (2009) argue, classroom teachers should negotiate discourses that students bring with them to the classroom from their backgrounds to make them beneficial to each member of the classroom while at the same time addressing students' need for individual recognition and differentiation. Further research should explore strategies that teachers can use effectively for such negotiations and to reposition students like Hashim and Ahmad without losing them.

Appendix

Your name: _____

Student-led Discussion #_____ Participant Preparation Page

A. Name of the discussion leader: _____

B. Identify the backgound material (if any)* _____

C. Prompt (3 discussion questions/items)--*Write the prompt IF you have to copy it in class. Otherwise, you can write, "See discussion schedule" or "See e-mail," as appropriate.*
1.
2.
3.

D. **Your response/ideas** about each prompt item--Include RELATED examples, events, stories (anecdotes), experiences, and/or information. **Write NOTES ONLY!--just key words/phrases/abbreviations/symbols.**		
1.	2.	3.

E. Possible **QUESTION(S)** to ask about the topic or to expand the topic*:

*See the background material if you need ideas for writing a question related to the topic.

Dear Student,

Thank you very much for volunteering to keep a diary for my research project. In your diary, I would like you to write about

1) **when and under what conditions you use English**
   For example: *I like to speak English when I am with people who do not speak my native language. For instance, yesterday there was a party and I spoke English with everybody. I felt very happy and was proud of myself…*

2) **your interactions with your teachers in the intensive English program, your classmates, and native speakers whom you interact with out of the classroom.**
   For example: *I really like to talk to my teacher because she understands the difficulties I am having in writing in English. She encourages me a lot. However, I feel uncomfortable when speaking with several classmates. They do not understand what I say because of my accent. For example, yesterday…*

3) **Your desires or goals for the future.**
   For example: *I want to speak English really well because I have several goals for the future. First, I want to be understood by everybody. My main goal is to survive in this country. If I speak English fluently, I will not have any communication problems with people. Second, I would like to find a good job…*

The main goal of the diaries for me will be to understand your language learning experiences, your emotions connected with these experiences, and if or how these experiences and their emotions have changed over time.

You will have two options for diaries. You will either 1) write or 2) speak and record your experiences and ideas **at least three times during a month**. Every month, you will e-mail me your written notes or provide a hard copy for me. You can also send me an audio-file. Please do NOT worry about your English and do NOT be afraid of making mistakes. My goal is NOT to evaluate your ability in English. I am only interested in your experiences and emotions. In your diaries, you can tell me anything that you think I should know. Please remember that I am the ONLY person who will read/listen to your diaries. I will NOT share them with anyone. I will use them only for my research without giving any identifying information about you.

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